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Mercredi 5 mai 2010

Speaker Honourable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 5 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 5 mai 2010

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Islamic prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LOWERING ENERGY COSTS FOR NORTHERN ONTARIANS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES COÛTS D'ÉNERGIE POUR LES ONTARIENS DU NORD

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 4, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit / Projet de loi 44, Loi mettant en œuvre le crédit pour les coûts d'énergie dans le Nord de l'Ontario.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I'm delighted to be able to continue my remarks from yesterday afternoon with regard to the northern Ontario energy credit. Just to refresh members' memories, this is an act that lowers energy costs for northern Ontarians and would amend the Taxation Act, 2007, to provide a northern Ontario energy credit for 2010 and subsequent taxation years for eligible individuals who live in northern Ontario.

I think that's the key. My colleagues the members of the northern Liberal caucus met with the Minister of Finance. We were very concerned that the budget reflect the reality of northern Ontario and that it is a very large land mass. My riding alone has 2,234 kilometres of provincial highways. We have a number of very small communities. I represent 37 municipalities. We have 22 First Nations. That is just the 86,000 square kilometres of Algoma-Manitoulin, which, I might add, is larger than all of southern Ontario. We have longer winters; we have colder winters; we have shorter days. That means that the cost of heating oil, the cost of electricity, the cost of perhaps natural gas-well, obviously natural gas-or propane for some, is more expensive, because the season when we need these things is longer. Our days are shorter, as I said.

What this tax credit is going to do: It is going to ensure that northerners with incomes of \$45,000 or less per household—they have to own or rent their principal residence in northern Ontario—would receive a tax credit of

\$200. It would phase out as we got to \$65,000, but it would look after those low- and middle-income families that do have challenges in meeting their energy bills. It would also, for single people, provide for a tax credit of \$130 that would phase in, I believe, up to \$35,000 and then gradually phase out at \$48,000. That would be of great assistance to my constituents. Will it solve all the problems? No, but it does recognize, as other programs do, that in northern Ontario, life is different. We have different challenges: The cost of energy, the cost of living on a whole spectrum of items is more expensive. That is why, for example, we provide licence plates for half the price that you would pay in most of southern Ontario. That helps a little bit with your gas. There are many issues.

If I go to Wawa or Hornepayne or Manitouwadge, I hear about gas prices even more than I do along the north shore of Lake Huron, and that's for a reason. The prices can be as much as 10 or 11 cents more per litre in those places than you would find even in a place like Espanola. It is incumbent upon the government of Ontario and, I think, the members of the Legislature to recognize that on the energy file, northerners have significant challenges. This is one more way the government has of addressing that.

My colleague from Thunder Bay-Atikokan mentioned the other day, "Well, what does \$200 buy?" If you were talking about, for example, HST, it would buy \$2,500 of room, I would call it. You could buy \$2,500 before you would exhaust the HST amount of money. If you combine that with all the other programs we have to both mitigate and aid the transition to the HST, you would find that that is a remarkably good deal for northern Ontarians. I want to say to my constituents that those folks in Elliot Lake, Manitoulin Island, and Espanola, where we have substantial numbers of retirees, will find this particularly important in meeting their challenges in the electricity field.

With that, I just want to again commend this to members. This does not solve every problem there is in the world, but it does recognize the unique situation of northern Ontario. It does recognize that the government understands that difference. I would hope that all members of the Legislature will stand and vote for this important proposal.

I would also tell members that on the energy file, large industrial users of electricity will receive a 25% reduction in the cost of their electricity, to make our mills, our refineries and our smelters more competitive. That is an expensive program. It will cost Ontario \$150 million a

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year, but it makes us more competitive. It's important in the forestry industry, which is a major employer in my constituency. I just wanted to bring that to the attention of members. So on the electricity file, for large industrial users, this is an important feature of the 2010 budget.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I listened closely to my colleague from Algoma—Manitoulin—God's country, as I call it, because it is a lovely place. On a recent fishing trip, though, I noticed the devastation that has taken place because of unemployment in our north country. It was very sad, and I think it is incumbent upon this Legislature and this government to assist the north in all regards, and energy is one of the prices they pay that is considerably higher, in many cases, than in the south.

I'm wholly supportive of this bill. The only proviso I have: I believe it's somewhat chintzy, in view of the cost of electricity—which we know, due to the efforts of this government, is going to increase drastically along with the HST. Are the grants that are set out in this bill sufficient to cover those costs? I have my doubts. I assume that this bill will be going to committee, and I'm sure we can explore at that time what the actual costs of energy in the north will be, what the increases will be, and then we can determine particularly whether or not the subsidies contained in this bill will be adequate to alleviate the problems in God's country.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm pleased to rise and make a few comments on the very salient points that the member from Algoma-Manitoulin made in regard to Bill 44, the northern Ontario energy bill. I know that Mr. Brown has been a member of this Legislature for many, many years and ranks very high on the seniority list in this place; he knows of what he speaks when he talks about the north.

He mentioned places like Wawa, Manitouwadge and other points of interest in the north, and how important this particular bill is to those persons in that community. I've had the opportunity to travel to the north on many occasions on the finance committee and always find it a fascinating geographic area of Ontario to visit. The expanse of the north is awesome, and the communities are beautiful. They offer a lot to Ontario.

With this bill, we are proposing a new permanent northern Ontario energy credit that would help eligible low-income northern residents with their energy costs. Energy costs are an issue in the north, and we're all keenly aware of that. Now we have this Bill 44, that addresses those concerns. Northern residents aged 18 or older who pay rent or property taxes for their principal residence would be eligible for an annual credit. A single person would be eligible for a credit of up to \$130, while a family would be eligible for up to \$200, including single parents.

There are many more items within this bill that are important, and points that could be made, but it's important

to note that this will help places like Algoma, Cochrane, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury and many, many others across the north.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide some comments in response to the address by the member from Algoma-Manitoulin. It was interesting: One of his comments that certainly resonated with me was the fact that he admitted that this bill doesn't solve all the problems of the world. Certainly, there are a number of problems when it comes to energy pricing in this province. I heard that loud and clear during my by-election.

As well, it was amazing to read in the paper today—and I'm glad that the Minister of Revenue is here, because one of the things that this bill doesn't solve is the problem that hit this province last weekend but will hit it with its full force on July 1. That's the HST. It was interesting this morning to hear the Premier, in response to some research that the New Democratic Party did about the HST, admit that it is going to have an extra cost to Ontario families. I'm so glad that the Minister of Revenue is here. Perhaps maybe he'll even make a few comments on this bill. Again, maybe he's going to make an admission today about the fact that this tax is going to burden Ontario families.

I'm very concerned, because as the member for Welland talked about yesterday—he mentioned, what about people in his corner of the province? People in my corner of the province, in eastern Ontario, have been extremely hard hit by this recession. They are extremely concerned about their hydro bill. Many of them visit me and express concern about the hydro policies of this government. Our hydro rates have gone up 74% since the members opposite took office, and I think that's of extreme concern for Ontarians.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd just like to say that, from our research in our party, we have come up with the real figures. I do believe that the HST is going to not only eradicate but destroy this credit that they're doing. The only time that this credit—if it was increased to a percentage where AbitibiBowater and the rest of the forestry industry would come back to Ontario and reopen the mills and paper mills that they've shut, then that would be a positive impact. But to give people a couple of bucks a month for their heating bill is hardly going to create more work. It's hardly going to bring those big companies back. So this bill falls woefully short of what we would have liked to have seen in it.

As pointed out by my colleague from the official opposition, the HST and all the other little things that are coming in are not only going to eat that up and destroy it within a year, but we have predicted that within the second year of the HST, the average family in Ontario will be paying up to \$1,800 a year for HST and things. That would eliminate that big \$1,000 that they're going to give back over three instalments over the next—there

will probably be one a month before the election of \$300. I don't think people will be fooled by that. I think the \$1,000 probably won't even cover haircuts, it's so bad.

I'm assuming that the government will be coming forward with more savings. I hope that they're going to come with more and add another bill, because this one certainly falls short of what we need.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member from Algoma-Manitoulin, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I would like to thank the members from Cambridge, Leeds-Grenville, Chatham-Kent-Essex and Hamilton East-Stoney Creek for their comments.

I would remind them that this is about the northern energy credit, which is \$200 per family for people who have a principal residence which they either own or rent in northern Ontario. A single person would be receiving \$130 if he or she owns or rents a principal residence in northern Ontario. It is a help to our families. It is a help to the people of northern Ontario. I am assured, I think, of the support of all of the members in this House for such an important—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Oh, don't count on that, Mike.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Well, I think I heard a little argument on the other side for a while, but I think they settled in favour of voting for it. This is an important credit for the people of northern Ontario.

To the point of my friend from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek: He would know that the budget included \$150 million for large industrial enterprises in northern Ontario. It would reduce the price of electricity for those industrial mills by 2 cents per kilowatt hour or by 25%, which would make those industrial places that much more competitive. That is pulp and paper mills, mines, refineries and smelters. That's the core of our northern economy, and we look forward to seeing that that happens in northern Ontario. I'm sure that, on that basis, the members will also support the budget bill.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to speak on this bill.

Again, to the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, who just spoke: This is a bill that we are going to support; however, when you talk about \$130—\$130? Come on.

Listen, I see energy bills in my constituency office every week, and I see the increase in energy costs we're facing in this province. When you start working with constituents to try to resolve some of these issues and resolve some of the bills, sometimes it's extremely frustrating with Hydro One. They just won't give people an inch. In fact, sometimes I have a better time helping somebody deal with an energy retailer than I do with Hydro One. When we talk about \$130, it's a joke, quite frankly.

Speaking specifically to the north, I had a chance to make a couple of comments about this bill in response to other speakers, and I may want to reiterate some of my experiences at this time. As you know, Speaker, I talked yesterday about the fact that when I was 22, I was elected mayor of Brockville; it was 1982. As I said yesterday, I remember going to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference and having my council sit me down and make sure I knew the one rule I needed to know when I sat in those resolution sessions—in those days it was in the ballroom of the Royal York hotel, and there were lots and lots of delegates, including people from the city of Toronto.

The one thing my council always told me: When those northern road resolutions come up, when those resolutions come up for northern Ontario, you need to support those 100% because of the issues they have in the north. Obviously there were road issues—there were lots of issues. We needed to support their efforts, and when they asked for our support for funding, we needed to provide it to them. It was a wonderful indoctrination that I had into municipal politics. Later on—

Mr. Jeff Leal: You brought the Shell refinery to Brockville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Absolutely, the wonderful Shell refinery. The member from Peterborough knows that well.

The other issue: I got to tour the north, because I ended up being president of AMO in 1989. At the time, there was a bit of an AMO curse: The AMO president seemed to get defeated in the municipal election. So in 1988, the mayor of Geraldton at the time, Michael Power, was defeated, and I was thrust into that position, but I got to travel to the north. It was funny—I spoke to Bob Maddocks, the CAO of one of my townships, the township of Rideau Lakes, and he recalled the story when I toured the north for our northern Ontario municipal conference.

I was late, because it was in winter, and it was so cold that the landing gear wouldn't drop on the plane, so I had to circle until the landing gear came down. The member for Algoma–Manitoulin talked earlier this morning about weather. Certainly I knew the challenges of weather in northern Ontario that day, when I had to circle and wait for the landing gear to come down.

This bill, as I said before, provides a \$130 credit which, again, is a joke when you look at the pricing policies of this government in terms of where we are with our energy costs. The issue of smart meters, for example, has caused great concern about seniors. Earlier this week, I spoke about meeting a gentleman in Brockville named Ed Lypchuk, who wrote a wonderful letter to the editor of one of our local papers entitled, "Hydro pricing schedule great for vampire lifestyle," where he talked about the fact that he'll have to become a senior vampire and do all of his business, and his laundry, by night, just like a vampire, because of this smart-meter and time-of-use pricing.

It was funny: He ended the editorial saying that he certainly wasn't going to be a blood-sucking vampire like this government is with the HST, with time-of-use rates and with their increase in energy costs. He's not going to be a blood-sucking vampire. He'll be a gentle vampire, unlike this government when it comes to its tax-and-spend policies.

The fact that we are now a have-not province is shameful. We used to be the economic engine of this country, and now we're the caboose. It's shameful—shameful—that this government has these policies and has put them in place. I see constituents almost on a weekly basis with grave concerns about their energy bills, with grave concern about what's in it for them. What is this government going to do to provide them relief? This bill provides \$130. I understand that if you make \$47,000, you get \$10. I'd like to know the administration that's in place behind this bill that creates a \$10 cheque to somebody. I'd love for somebody on the other side of the House to give me that costing. It's ridiculous.

I'd love to be able to share my time with my good friend from Cambridge, if he's inclined to share some time. He's a little reluctant; he's a little shy. I'm very pleased to make these comments on the bill. Thank you for your patience, Speaker. I appreciate it.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I'm somewhat reluctant to speak again, because I said kind words about my friend from Manitoulin and he forgot to thank me in his response, so I really was put out. But in any event, I'll continue on, even though I carry that to my eternal shame.

In any event, we're dealing with Bill 44. I think we have to put it in perspective. As I say, I am supporting this bill. What I am not supporting is its failure to really meet the needs of the north. In that regard, we have to look at the framework of what's happening in the north, and whom could I quote better than the Toronto Star, a newspaper known for its quality of opinion?

Today they have a headline: "Tax Bite Bigger Than Expected." They're talking about the HST, which of course relates directly to energy costs, because we know that energy costs are going up by a minimum of 8%—possibly 10%—and the HST, at 13%, will be added—

Interjections.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: There seems to be a conversation going on beside me, and it's hard to hear myself think. In any event, I will continue on.

Interjection: Keep going.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: Thank you.

As I was saying, I was praising my friend for speaking to this bill. I have to relate to the Toronto Star article, one of the few articles I've ever agreed with printed by the Toronto Star, I must admit. As I mentioned, its headline was "Tax Bite Bigger Than Expected," which leads me to a point.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Order.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I seem to remember, over the last few months, that the HST was going to be revenue-neutral, which meant there was no increase or decrease. It was revenue-neutral. Now the headline is, "Tax Bite Bigger Than Expected." Well, there wasn't a tax bite to start with, because it was revenue-neutral, and somehow—I don't understand the headline.

In any event, it would seem that the New Democratic Party spent a considerable amount of money requisitioning a study by experts who concluded, as I understand it, that the average family will pay an additional \$792 annually. Again, I don't understand the headline, because it talks about "bigger than expected" when it was revenue-neutral before, so it's a great difficulty. The Toronto Star has basically accepted, I assume, the study by the NDP that it will result in \$792 additional for an average family.

When we're looking at Bill 44—I'm coming back to it, Speaker—we have to compare the increase in the HST with the credits, for instance, under the bill. Now, a single person would be eligible for a credit of \$130. When looking at the pure energy costs, we know that the increase in energy costs—much of it due to the negligence of this government, those costs. When we're looking at those costs and we know they're going to increase by a minimum of 8%, possibly more—that's not including the HST, now; I'm just talking about it—it would seem that for a single person, they're going to lose out, just on the energy costs—and that does not include the total that they're going to have to pay for a single person's share of the \$792, which was for a family, of course. You would have to scale that back.

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For a family, under this act, there is a credit which is totally inadequate, because you could have five children, you could have one child, but the amount would be the same. They would be eligible for up to—not guaranteed—\$200. There are many conditions that you're going to have to meet, and means tests as to your income, but they would be eligible for up to \$200. Again, when you look at just the ramifications of the HST, according to the article in the Toronto Star dated May 5, 2010, the additional cost per annum for a family will be \$792 annually. That does not include any increases for energy, which this government has already said will be increased by a minimum of 8%. So there seems to be an imbalance.

Though I am supporting the bill, as I mentioned in the first instance, I do not think it is adequate. From what I saw in the north—we, in our area, as a result of the actions of this government, still have unemployment over 9%. That is substantial for a fast-growing region, the region of Waterloo. In the north it is much more serious, from what I saw. I saw buildings abandoned, homes that were totally abandoned and falling down because of disrepair. It reminded me, quite frankly, of a small-scale Detroit, because in Detroit I saw neighbourhoods that were really difficult. From what I saw—

Hon. Monique M. Smith: You're insulting the north. Where were you?

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I will not name—I was in the north; I wasn't necessarily in your riding. But I was somewhat concerned at the state of repair of many of the homes that I saw in the area. I don't go to the north often, so that's why it was somewhat of a shock, because the last time I was there, some time ago on committees of this Legislature, it seemed to me that the north was prospering; they were doing well. People seemed relatively happy, and things were sort of okay. On my latest trip, which took place a year ago, I noticed a substantial

change in this area of the north that I was in, and I was quite frankly shocked, if I can use that word without elaborating on it. It just wasn't what I had expected.

The thing that was as I expected was the fishing. The pickerel and walleye fishing in the north is as good as ever. We in the south, when we fish in the lakes in southern Ontario, think we have half-decent fishing, but in the north, I must admit, it was worth the 15-hour drive, because the fishing was excellent.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Lots of pickerel in Lake Nipissing. You must have been out in a lodge on this northern trip.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: Well, we can talk about Lake Nipissing—which was my favourite fishing spot, until recently. Because walleye are still the best eating fish in the world, in my opinion. They are the best, as the Speaker knows, because he comes from walleye country. He is a fisherman of some repute, I understand.

In any event, I am supporting the bill, but with the proviso that it is not adequate to meet the needs of the north, which in many respects has been devastated by the loss of jobs and the increasing costs of living there, including energy. With that proviso, I will sit down.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: It's always a pleasure to listen to the member from Cambridge, as well as the member for Leeds—Grenville. I know they stood strongly on our position on this bill, on how it's really an unfair assessment of all of the people who are going to be attacked by the government's poor policy on energy pricing, electricity specifically. It's not just the HST component of our heating bill or the gas in our car; it's the impact, broadly.

The NDP have done a wonderful job. I want to compliment them in terms of, once we've looked at this—the statisticians, not the politicians. The Minister of Revenue has always said that this is revenue-neutral. Now we know that the jig is up. It's probably going to cost every single person in Ontario about an extra \$1,000. Everything you buy, from Kleenexes right through to your car, is going to be taxed to the max. It's the most selfish tax grab, in a time in the economy when you're suffering.

I think of seniors mostly, whether they live in Thunder Bay, Timiskaming or my riding of Durham. They're the ones I'm standing up for; those are the very ones. They are attacking the pharmacists now. They are raising energy prices. They've got the HST. You've got the health tax. They're not telling you the whole story on the smart meter. On the smart meter, they're going to blame you for not conserving. This is an all-out assault on people of modest means, and it's unacceptable.

This particular bill deals with the north. How are they going to deal with the south, the east and the west, eastern Ontario? This is a government out of control on the spending side. We're being taxed to death, and the services are falling by the wayside. It's sad. We're almost like Greece.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: This will be short; it's a two-minute one. I'd just like to say that this bill once again falls short. Thanks for the compliment from the official opposition. Our research people did a wonderful job on this.

I've sat here and listened for weeks upon weeks of this government saying, "Oh, it's going to be revenue-neutral. There will be no increase. You're going to save money on your income tax." I've heard them all say it; they've all said it. They even did standing ovations. Then, yesterday, the Premier really told the true story. His minimum, at \$800 more—I think it's going to be a lot higher than that, because some of the research we did nationally also—which included Ontario—is that actually it's going to cost closer to \$1,800 per family per year because of the HST, because of increased energy costs.

This government is not telling the whole story. This government doesn't want to tell the whole story, because if the people knew, they would be outraged to find out that they're going to pay a lot more than they used to. The member from Manitoulin kept talking about this hydro break for the companies, and all that. Why are they all leaving and going to Manitoba and Quebec? I'll tell you why. They pay two thirds less in those provinces for hydro than they do in Ontario. If they're not, why aren't they coming back? I know that a lot of towns in the north have shut down completely, and the biggest employer in some of the towns is the hospital. That tells me a lot. Young people are leaving the north every week to go down south looking for jobs.

So they're painting a pretty good picture up there but, believe me, it's not. Certainly in the next election, they'll find out how bad a picture they've painted.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: Speaker, thank you for the couple of minutes I have. First, I want to thank the member from Cambridge for his expression of support for the legislation. I think that reflects on a number of comments we've heard from those in opposition—that it's their intention to support this legislation because it is good legislation for northern Ontario.

I particularly appreciated his fish stories in part, but I have to tell you that the real whopper of a fish story was the one the member for Durham was trying to tell, because this fish went from here, to here; it was a big HST whopper of a story he was trying to tell. I know I digress from the member from Cambridge's comments, but I can't help it.

The member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek doesn't even believe their own research. He took the member from Durham's fish story that grew to this, and he made it grow like this.

The reality is the member from Cambridge spoke to it, as have other members in this place in the past few days. Northern Ontario has very special challenges and we, as government, have an obligation to meet those challenges to the best of our ability with the capacity available.

I know the member from Cambridge listened very carefully to the member from Algoma-Manitoulin; I know he

listened to the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane; I know he listened to the member from Nipissing; I know he listened to the member from Sault Ste. Marie; I know he listened to the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan; I know he listened to the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. He had the opportunity to hear from those who are represented and he responded to their request to express his support for the bill. I'm looking forward to the vote and certainly his opportunity to support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I would just like to use the time that I have to make sure that people understand. The first point about this bill is the fact that it was taken off the budget bill. It wasn't part of the many schedules that were in the budget—because, obviously, it is essentially a budget item.

The other problem, I think, that people have in looking at this bill is the fact that there is a handout here in this bill, but many of the government speakers talk about the unique and, I would add, dire situations that are present in the north. So we have to look at how much of this is going to actually aid those communities in the north that so desperately need to find work, frankly—that need to get back to work.

One of the government speakers, I believe—although it may have just been someone else—made the comment that it would cost \$50 million for a mill to restart. Then I put that in the context of giving people who have a means test between \$100 and \$200. It seems to me that this is much more the cost of an investment in public relations than it is assisting the economy desperately needed in this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Leeds-Grenville, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Steve Clark: On behalf of myself and the member for Cambridge, I would like to thank the member for Durham, the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, the member for Pickering-Scarborough East and the member for York-Simcoe for their comments.

I think it was my friend the member for Cambridge who first talked about the fish stories. We've had lots of banter back and forth this morning about fish stories, but when we talk about having a bill like Bill 44—and again, my colleagues on this side of the House, the official opposition, have stated countless times during this debate the fact that we support the north and the fact that we'll be supporting this bill. However, you look at \$130. Again, it's ridiculous. It's a joke, I think someone said earlier.

I think the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek struck a nerve when he used the words "all-out assault," or perhaps it was the member from Durham who said, "an all-out assault." That got a bit of a rise out of the government members, because in the days and weeks to come, we're going to hear from Ontarians about this government's policies. We're going to hear from seniors

and people on fixed incomes when they get their energy bills after July 1; when they go to the pump to pump gas after July 1.

I think that in the days and weeks ahead, this bill, although it does support the north—we will hear from those in the south, the east and the west. I truly believe that this government is going to hear loud and clear from Ontarians about how disappointed they are in their energy policies.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), there having been six and a half hours of debate, this debate will be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: We're adjourning the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The debate is therefore adjourned.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

PENSION BENEFITS AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES RÉGIMES DE RETRAITE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 28, 2010, on the motion for third reading of Bill 236, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Act / Projet de loi 236, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les régimes de retraite.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

Does the minister wish to respond?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: We appreciate the opportunity to have a debate on this bill, and we look forward to moving it forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Ms. Smith has moved third reading of Bill 236. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This vote will be deferred until after question period.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Orders of the day?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: No further business this morning.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): There being no further business this morning, this House will recess until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 0947 to 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just like to say that, as Speaker, part of my job is to provide balance, and I'm trying to deal with an issue right now. I've got members complaining it's too cold and others say it's just great, so we will endeavour to find balance.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I would like to introduce our guests who are on their way into the Legislature from the Canadian Hearing Society: Veronica Bickle, Pat Morano, Maureen Baskerville, and their interpreter, Lorna Schuster. Welcome to all of their delegations that are visiting members in the Legislature today.

Hon. Margarett R. Best: It's my pleasure to welcome the parents and family of my page from Scarborough—Guildwood, Ms. Nirosha Balakumar: her mom, Asha Balakumar; her dad, Balakumar Sinnathamby; her sister, Priya Balakumar; and her cousin, Nicole Anjali Jeyanathan. It's a pleasure to welcome you to the Legislature today.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: It's a pleasure to introduce Andrew Scott, who is a grade 12 student at Sinclair high school in Whitby. Andrew has been accepted to study history at the Royal Military College next year. He's also a sea cadet. Andrew is going to be shadowing me today to find out what an MPP does. Welcome, Andrew.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: It is a pleasure to welcome Hillary Keirstead, a constituent of York South-Weston and also a summer student in our constituency office. Welcome, Hillary.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I have the great pleasure to introduce to the House a delegation from the People's Republic of China, specifically from Zhejiang province. They came here today to see how government business is being conducted, especially in the House. Their delegation consists of Mr. Wang, who is the vice-premier, Mr. Xu, Mr. Lu, Mr. Hu, Mr. He, Mr. Yao and Mrs. Zou. Congratulations, and thank you for visiting us.

Mr. John Yakabuski: My guests have not arrived yet. That's probably because I was in a meeting and not at the door to meet them, but they will be here shortly: Diane Walsworth and Jean Davies from my riding. The reason they're here is a fundraiser for the Bonnechere Union library, at which they bid on an auction—and that was the occasion to have lunch with their MPP at Queen's Park and have a personal tour of the facilities here. They are here today. They bid the highest in the auction. We thank them for the support of the Bonnechere Union library and welcome them to the House today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I trust that the honourable member is going to show them how well behaved he is, too.

The member for Northumberland-Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'm not going to name them, but we have a number of folks from Northumberland-Quinte West here today in room 228, and they're going to be coming through the House on and off all day.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Mississauga—Streetsville and page Vrajesh Dave, to welcome his mother, Priti Dave, his father, Hemant Dave, his brother Niraj Dave, his grandmother Ansuya Patel and his grandfather Kanti Patel to the east members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome the grade 5 class from Bishop Strachan School and their teacher, Cathy Powell, to the east gallery today. We welcome all the students, including Shamsa Qaadri, daughter of MPP Qaadri, and Mira Korngold, granddaughter of MPP Sorbara. Welcome to Oueen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Premier. Former Liberal staffer Mohamed Dhanani is a candidate for Toronto city council in this year's municipal election. Dhanani's Web page includes the boast, "Most recently, I served as senior adviser to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure at Queen's Park where I was a lead negotiator in one of the largest economic development deals in Ontario's history, creating a new industry...." He's clearly referring to his role in the Samsung deal.

Why did you appoint a political staffer as your lead negotiator with Samsung?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm going to refer this to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I know very slightly the gentleman the member is referring to. I understand that he was employed by one of my predecessors.

The fact is that our government worked very hard to get the best possible agreement for Ontarians, to ensure, indeed, that the Samsung agreement would deliver 16,000 jobs to this province; to ensure that this agreement would open four new manufacturing facilities, creating at least 1,240-odd full-time jobs in manufacturing; to ensure that \$7 billion of private sector investment came into the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Mr. Dhanani didn't have any particular experience in this area. He had no legal training or experience in energy. Before joining George Smitherman's office, his main qualifications were a Liberal membership and being the hand-picked appointee to chair the Toronto Centre LHIN. And the deal was done outside the usual tendering process. In effect, it is the mother of all untendered contracts.

Was Dhanani tapped to be your lead negotiator because of experience in handing out untendered contracts and sweetheart deals at the LHIN?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I appreciate the role that this gentleman may have played in terms of providing advice to one of my predecessors in this position, but certainly his role has been overstated by you and potentially others who may have talked about what his role may have been.

The fact is that this is a very positive initiative for Ontarians. It's an initiative that helps build the critical mass we need to build in this province, that we're setting out to build in this province to move forward on the energy front, to create jobs in this province—new green jobs that

are the next generation of economic jobs, that are going to help create that green energy hub we're working so hard to create. This initiative is a very important initiative to the future of energy in this province, and we're very, very proud to be moving forward in partnership with—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final

supplementary.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: The fact is that the Premier and the former Minister of Energy picked a foreign company with no Canadian experience over Ontario's home-

grown renewable energy industry.

Tom Rankin, of Rankin Renewable Power, says, "The province made rules for everybody to follow. If they can just walk in and jump to the head of the queue, I don't think that's fair." Dave Butters, of the Association of Power Producers of Ontario, says, "It's just wrong at every level of public policy we can think of. The industry feels like they've been thrown under the bus."

Ontario families and seniors are footing a bill for this secret untendered contract with increased energy rates and new taxes. Why would they have confidence that your lead negotiator, a political staffer with no legal training or energy experience, negotiated a good deal for them?

1040

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm not really sure why the Conservatives would be against the \$7-billion private sector investment in our economy. That's beyond me. Why would they be against the 16,000 new jobs in this economy as a result of the Green Energy Act? That's only a piece of the investment that we've been able to attract. There's another \$9 billion of private sector investment as a result of the Green Energy Act that's moving forward, that's creating projects as a result of 184 other approvals that came forward under the feed-in tariff program. That's going to create another 20,000 jobs. If you ask me, that's good news for Ontarians, that's good news for our economy, and that's helping us build cleaner, more productive sources of energy that are going to drive our economy and our energy sector forward into a much brighter future than it would have been under your-

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. New question.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday you admitted that the HST will hit Ontario families in their pocketbooks, but you're driving ahead with your agenda anyway. Perhaps the Premier found the moment of honesty cleansing, so maybe he will also explain George Smitherman's visit to Korea last June, where he collected an award at a gala held by the World Wind Energy Conference last year. You never publicly congratulated your minister. Is it because you didn't want anyone to know that George Smitherman was in Korea?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: This is all very interesting, but what I think it speaks to fundamentally is that we have a Conservative Party which is afraid of a global

economy; they're afraid of opening Ontario to new possibilities; they're afraid of us moving forward in this global economy and seizing new opportunities. I just want to, for the purpose of Ontarians' benefit, draw a clear line of distinction. We don't shrink from the future. We're not afraid of the global economy. We embrace that, and we embrace the opportunities to be found there. If we can find new investments coming from Korea or Japan or China or India or any other part of this world to come into our province and create jobs for the people of Ontario and support our families and support our economy and support our health care and support our education, we're proud to do it.

Interiections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. The member from Durham. The member from Halton. The member from Peterborough.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Nepean—Carleton will please withdraw the comment that she just made.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I withdraw.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It's not helpful, the member from Peterborough. I learn these voices. I don't have to look at you; I can hear you.

Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I prefer it when it's much quieter, yes.

The sweetheart deal that Dalton McGuinty handed to Samsung came out of nowhere. No one is registered to lobby for the Korean company. Now it looks like the deal was cooked up offshore when George Smitherman was in Korea to collect his mysterious award. The JoongAng Daily reports that Koreans are saying they came away with big subsidies and concessions on construction permits and environmental reviews.

You're keeping the deal secret so no one knows what Ontario families gave up for what they get in return. Did you make Ontario families and seniors pay \$437 million just so George Smitherman could be Korea's man of the year?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, my honourable colleague, on behalf of his party, gives expression to their fear of the global economy and their refusal to acknowledge the wonderful opportunities and the possibilities that can be created for Ontario families.

I gather that they are offended by a company based in Dearborn that employs thousands of Ontarians; it's called GM. I guess they're offended by another company that's based in Auburn Hills that employs thousands of Ontarians; it's called Chrysler. There's another company that has just announced a second shift; it's called Toyota. Another one that has announced a second shift is called Honda. There's another one, GE—they're based in the US—that has announced a new investment in the province of Ontario.

The world is waiting for us to move forward and seize those new opportunities and seize those new possibilities. They are mired in the past. We're for the future. We're for a strong economy.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order.

Final supplementary.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Ontarians subsidize a large Korean multinational and all we get from the Premier is hot air.

Something about this deal is so secret, the Premier isn't even letting the auditor look at it. Ontario's homegrown industry—and we heard from Dave Butters—wonders why there was no public bidding. The Environmental Commissioner criticizes your energy decisions, including this secret deal, for a lack of transparency, accountability and public participation. When Smitherman returned from Korea with his award, deal in hand, instead of a hero's welcome, he was gang tackled in a cabinet meeting.

The integrity of this deal is in question. Why would you refuse to reassure Ontario families by inviting the auditor to review the deal? Or better yet, post the Sam-

sung contract online. Let the people decide.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Just to restate something my colleague the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure said a moment ago, just to be clear, in addition to the investment that we have secured through Samsung—\$7 billion, 16,000 jobs and four manufacturing plants—there are also another 180-some separate contracts with Ontario companies securing \$9 billion worth of investment and 20,000 jobs.

I also say to my honourable colleague, what would he have said had he learned that in our competition with the US to secure this new investment from Samsung, we had lost out on that investment and we had lost out on those 16,000 jobs? He wouldn't understand a win if it was to bite him in the face. This is a big win for the people of Ontario. We fought in the global economy for this contract. We landed this contract for the people of Ontario.

1050

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier finally admitted what Ontario families knew all along: that the HST would cost them more. Eight hundred dollars a year is a lot of money for families. That's groceries for a month or gas in the car for four months.

Why did it take the Premier over a year to admit to families that they're going to be paying more with the HST?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague and I have had many opportunities to speak to this issue. She is apparently in possession of some magic, of which we are not in possession here in government.

We've lost some 250,000 jobs as a result of this recession. We believe that Ontarians understand we're going to have to do a few things differently to grow stronger.

We believe that growing stronger is not an option for us. It involves doing some things that are difficult. We are going to move ahead with the HST.

There are 140 other countries where they already have the HST. When we send our export businesses out into the global economy to compete at present, they are doing it with their hands tied behind their backs. What we want to do is free them up so they can compete on the same standing and the same even ground as other companies, so that they can create 600,000 more jobs for our families. That is what this economy comes down to: It's jobs for today and jobs for tomorrow.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We used StatsCan's economic model to estimate the impact of the HST on families, the same one that governments and think tanks across the country regularly use. Even after the government's so-called package of help, the average family is left paying \$470 extra a year. That's a few months of hydro bills or a summer camping trip with the kids.

If the Premier is so certain, as he continues to declare that imposing this new burden on families is a good thing, then why the heck has he been hiding the facts for over a year?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm just not a big fan of NDP math. There may be a small constituency in Ontario that supports that particular style of calculation, but I'm not.

What I said to Ontarians before, and I'll say again, is that if you're confused as to where the numbers are coming from, then I'd refer you to two independent studies: one put out by the University of Calgary and one put out by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. The former says that we're going to create 600,000 more jobs over the course of 10 years and land \$47 billion more by way of new investment.

I would think that my honourable colleague, representing the wonderful community of Hamilton, would want to know that we should be working together to do everything we possibly can, particularly to strengthen our manufacturing sector, so that it can create more jobs for communities like Hamilton.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier should wake up and smell the coffee and watch all those jobs that are still walking away from Hamilton, like Siemens that walked away even knowing the HST was coming online. Let's not pretend that your scheme is getting jobs in Hamilton, because it's not.

Families are going to pay, and they're going to pay big: thousands of dollars every year in new taxes, thanks to the McGuinty Liberals, and those aren't NDP figures; those are StatsCan's figures. It's far from the revenue-neutral scheme that this Ontario government talks about, even when we factored in the so-called help that they claim to be giving families.

Finally, yesterday, the Premier admitted that people are going to be paying more, but I still have to ask, how

will taking hundreds of dollars out of family budgets actually help our economy?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Just to quote the folks over at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives—again, the title of their study was, Not a Tax Grab After All. This is a quotation from that report: "Harmonized sales tax ... is virtually revenue-neutral when viewed as part of a total tax package ... the tax credits and tax cuts have the effect of offsetting the impact of the increased HST revenue for low-income and of moderate-income families and moderating the impact for other families" in Ontario.

Again, I would refer Ontarians to independent studies rather than the NDP math. I would encourage my colleague to be straight with the people of Ontario. We need to do things a little bit differently in order to strengthen this economy and create more jobs, not just for us today but for our kids tomorrow

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The numbers I'm quoting from are current numbers, and they're very, very clear and obvious. To anybody who wants to see the research, we're happy to provide it.

My second question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier told Ontario families that they're going to be paying more to help Ontario businesses. That's pretty much how he's couched it. What I want to know is, exactly how much is his HST scheme going to transfer from families to businesses?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think we've indicated in the past, several times over, that the total tax cuts for Ontarians as individuals grossly exceeds the tax cuts that we're making available for businesses, and I know my colleague is aware of that.

The premise of her question is that there is this perpetual divide between our families and our businesses. I'd like to think that, as Ontarians, we've moved beyond that. We understand how important it is for our businesses to be successful, so that they can grow and create more jobs for us, so that we can support our families and support our public services.

I would encourage my colleague to move away from that old mindset that says that you've got to pit families against businesses and understand that, in fact, we've got to have strong businesses so that we can have strong families, and if we have strong families, we can have strong businesses.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier has obviously refused to say just how much money the HST will raise from Ontario families. That's why New Democrats used the Stats Canada model to do just that. It turns out that the HST will take \$5.9 billion out of family budgets, and under your scheme, most of that money—almost \$4 billion—won't go to schools, hospitals or nurses, but will go to tax cuts for business.

Why should the average family take an \$800 hit to their annual budget just to fund someone else's multibillion dollar tax cut? Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to quote the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives because I think it's important to introduce a bit of light into this debate and a little less heat. They are independent and a third party. They said that the harmonized sales tax is "virtually revenue-neutral when viewed as part of a total tax package ... the tax credits and tax cuts have the effect of offsetting the impact of the increased HST revenue for low-income and moderate-income families and of moderating the impact for other families" in Ontario.

Having said that, we have always said that what we are about to ask families to do is not an easy thing. We've restricted this to 17% of consumer purchases; 83% will remain unaffected by this tax change. We're doing this because we need to grow stronger. We need to position ourselves so that we're stronger in the global economy. We've lost 250,000 jobs. Let's create 600,000 new ones.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I just wanted to quote from a letter I quoted from yesterday from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which did conclude findings similar to what we concluded, that the lowest-income folks are going to have a bit of a wash when it comes to the HST. This letter also said that the CCPA did not take a position as to the desirability of the HST as such. It also raised concerns about the impact on First Nations and seniors who do not benefit from the credit increases that the government always talks about.

But you know what? Ontario certainly does need to help businesses—I would agree; especially small businesses—to prosper and grow, but whacking their customers with an \$800 tax is a dumb way to do it.

Does the Premier really think that it's fair to ask the average family to take an \$800 hit to their budget just so someone else can receive a multi-billion dollar tax cut?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: That wouldn't be fair, and that's why we're not doing it. I'm not sure where my colleague is getting those numbers, except as part of some fantastic interpretation of our package of tax reforms.

I'm not sure if I can say anything more than I've already said, except to recommend to Ontarians independent studies, to remind them once again of why we're doing this and to acknowledge that what we're asking them to do is not necessarily an easy thing. But I think there comes a time when every generation has to ask themselves what they need to do to secure a bright future for their kids. We've come to the conclusion that this is part of that answer. We've got to put in place a value-added tax, the HST—that they have in 140 other countries; we'll now be the sixth province to put this in place—so that we have a strong economy that creates jobs, not just for us today but for our kids tomorrow.

Really, it's as straightforward as that.

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Premier. George Smitherman's "man of the year" award is not the

only thing the Premier tried to slip past Ontario families. For months, Dalton McGuinty has been sitting on the fact that he knew all along his HST tax grab would attack household budgets.

Why did you wait until now to confess that you knew the HST would hit Ontario families and seniors hard in their pocketbooks?

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: As the Premier was saying, it's very simple: On this side of the House, we have a plan to create 600,000 more jobs and attract \$47 billion worth of investment. On the other side of the House, they have no plan. What they're telling us to do is status quo, don't change anything, when the good people of Ontario know that the world indeed has changed and the responsible thing for our government to do is to understand that and make sure we're taking whatever steps are necessary today to secure a brighter future for our children and our grandchildren.

We are convinced that despite the fact that this is a challenge, it is the right thing to do. I think it's so right and it's so plainly obvious that even the opposition have said they're going to keep it. I can't ask for any more validation than the fact that they agree with our plan. If they didn't, they would say how they would change—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: I don't know how the Premier can refer this question.

But I will say, the minister is talking about jobs. You're very good at promising jobs, but not so good at delivering them.

Up until yesterday, the Premier was saying the HST would have no impact on families, but he knew all along that it would hit Ontario families and seniors, who already struggle to pay Dalton McGuinty's health tax; higher rates for power; \$350 a year more in energy taxes; his smart meter tax grab; new taxes on electronics, tires, plastic bags. Now he has changed what he says about the HST to, "I know that what we're asking of families is not easy." But, Premier, you haven't asked at all. Why are you saying you asked families, when you rammed the HST through?

Hon. John Wilkinson: As I was saying, on this side of the House we actually have a plan to attract \$47 billion worth of new investments. Do you know what that creates? That creates new 21st-century jobs.

I know the members opposite, who are the proponents of the status quo, believe the smartest thing we can do in this province is nothing. That's their advice to us. But the good people of Ontario know that the world indeed has changed and it falls to us to make difficult decisions.

As the Premier was saying, the HST will impact people. But let's not forget all of the tax cuts, all of the measures that people will benefit from, and the fact that the opposition has consistently voted against every one of those measures. They don't believe that we should have

cut income taxes for the people in this province to the lowest rate of any province in this country. They don't believe there should be an HST rebate for the people who have the least—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Many injured workers have life-altering experiences—ones which the WSIB should be helping you through, not causing roadblocks and downright pitfalls—but we know that when an injured worker is ready to return to the workplace and needs to be retrained, the worst days could be just starting.

How does the WSIB determine which career colleges an injured worker will be sent to?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: To the member opposite, this government cares very deeply about our injured workers. That is why we have increased the amount of benefits for injured workers three times, 2.5% each time—7.5%. We also just raised injured worker benefits again, just a couple of months ago. Contrast that with the member's party and the Conservative Party, where they did not raise injured worker benefits over a 12-year period. Over a 12-year period, they barely touched the benefits to injured workers.

I'll speak more in the supplementary about what we're doing to help workers re-enter the marketplace through our labour market re-entry program, but—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: We have many emails from injured workers who have been duped by the system into taking training that leads nowhere. They're injured workers who have been sent to private career colleges by the WSIB, who attend in good faith only to discover, upon completing their course, that that private career college is not accredited, cannot issue a diploma and has been a complete and utter waste of their time and public money. Then, imagine, despite being told about the unaccredited private career college rip-off, the WSIB cuts off the injured workers, claiming that they have been retrained and must now find new work.

What on earth is going on here? How can such a monumental mistake keep happening over and over again?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: The labour market re-entry program is a very important program. What we want to do is make sure that we can help any worker who has been injured in the workplace re-enter the labour market. That's why we've had a review of that labour market re-entry program.

I can say that the new president of the WSIB, David Marshall, is looking at this very closely and looking at how we can change that program so that we have the positive outcomes that we are all looking for. Those positive outcomes are that those injured workers are able to reintegrate into the marketplace and find meaningful employment. This is something that we can all agree upon. I can agree with the member that that program needs to be fixed, and that's what is happening as we speak.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. Khalil Ramal: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, my constituents of London-Fanshawe have heard a lot about drug reform. As you know, Minister, people were very happy and thrilled to see the price of drugs going down, especially common drugs for blood pressure, antibiotics and many other drugs. They were happy to see the cost go down, because they will save a lot of money. But in the meantime, they heard a lot of stories as a result of ads by big chains, like Shoppers Drug Mart and Pharma Plus, talking about reducing services to the people of Ontario, especially for our riding of London-Fanshawe. So can you tell us what the impact is of this reform on services for the people of London?

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. Somebody's face is very red.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I apologize.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you for the

apology. Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the remarkable and outstanding member from London-Fanshawe. Despite the millions and millions of dollars that are being spent by those who oppose our plan, I'm very happy to hear that Ontarians are getting the message that our reforms would dramatically reduce the price of drugs in Ontario. Whether it's antibiotics for kids, birth control pills or medication for high blood pressure or depression, Ontarians are paying too much for drugs. I think we have a responsibility to fix that, to take action, and that is what we are doing.

Yesterday, Loblaws announced that they have a plan to expand their drugstores as a result of our proposed changes. They intend to open more pharmacies and extend those hours—keep them open longer. Access to pharmacy care is an important part of our plan. I'm very happy to see we're making—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Supplementary?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I guess this news would be very important for my constituents. Also, I want to tell you, Minister, about a very important issue. The people of my riding are confused as a result of many different messages. Last Friday, almost 56 students from pharmacy departments came to my office, and they talked about the cuts. Also, the people of London receive a lot of calls from telemarketers telling them we're cutting services for the people of Ontario.

Can you tell us, Minister, as a result of your drug reform, how is it going to be helpful for the people, and no cut for the front-line health care providers in the province of Ontario? It's very important to my riding and also to all the ridings across the province of Ontario.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It's very important that Ontarians get the whole story here. We pay too much for generic drugs. It's that simple. No one has argued against that. The reason we're paying too much is because these so-called professional allowances are inflating the cost of our drugs. Our plan is simple, too. We want to bring down the cost of generic drugs by at least 50%. We can do this by banning the payments from generic companies to pharmacies. Our plan, also, is to put almost \$300 million back into pharmacy in higher dispensing fees for the drugs that we, as a government, buy; for expanded services that pharmacists provide; and for special supports in rural communities. We're making these changes for patients, hard-working Ontarians who are paying too—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

1110

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Minister of Finance. On budget day, when 18 of our PC members tried to leave the lockup so that we could be in our seats in this chamber when the budget was presented, we were blocked from doing so. When the minister's office finally gave the order to release us at about 3:55, we rushed from the briefing room to the chamber as quickly as possible, because many of our members arrived late. Members of the Liberal caucus jeered and laughed at us in front of the guests seated in the galleries who were invited from across the province.

Why has the minister refused to apologize for the role his office played in obstructing our members?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I am going to give the member an opportunity to ask a new question. This is a matter that the Speaker ruled on yesterday. The House agreed as a whole that the matter be referred to a committee for the committee to conduct a review and investigation of what took place on March 25. I believe that that is the appropriate course right now. I will allow the member to ask a new question on another subject, but I will not allow that question to be put.

Mr. Ted Arnott: With respect, this matter is still before the House because it's before a standing committee of the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No. The Speaker has ruled on this—to refer this matter to committee. I'm giving you an opportunity to ask a new question.

Okay. New question. The member for Parkdale-High Park.

HOMELESSNESS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This week, the Salvation Army released a new survey on homelessness in Canada. They found that one in eight Ontarians have experienced or come close to experiencing homelessness, almost three times the rate of Quebec. Why is the McGuinty govern-

ment falling so far behind Quebec in reducing homelessness?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I will share with the member—because I know she likes to hear these figures, and sometimes they bear repetition. The member has perhaps forgotten we have committed to creating and repairing at least 76,500 housing units. We're delivering close to 35,000 rent supplements to help make rent more affordable to Ontario families. Our rent bank has prevented nearly 23,000 evictions so far; on an average, that means keeping 330 families in their home every month.

In agreement with the federal government, we're investing \$622 million. The federal government is matching that, for a combined total—unprecedented, in my view—of \$1.2 billion for housing. Some \$704 million of this was allocated for the social housing renovation and retrofit program. And to date, we've seen \$260 million spent for repairs improving—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Sup-

plementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: We have one of the worst records addressing homelessness in Canada, and this study shows it. This report shows that one and a half million Ontarians are at risk of homelessness. Quebec has barrelled ahead with affordable housing while this government, as the Auditor General has also made clear, has cut the capacity of the ministry of housing, lost track of hundreds of millions of federal housing dollars and failed to make housing programs truly affordable.

How many more Liberal housing ministers will Ontarians have to live through before Ontarians have the same access to affordable housing enjoyed by Quebecers?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Now that we have the federal government committed to this program, it's going to make a substantial difference. I think what the member understood, probably very well, was that there was a period of time when a previous government was in power, when the federal and provincial governments were not involved in public housing to any great extent. They started to abandon that field. Our government, since taking office, has moved rapidly to try to address this.

Is there more to do? There's always more to do. I understand that. We are developing those policies. We are adding those funds each and every year. The rent bank I mentioned, for instance, which helps keep people in their homes, helped over 22,700 Ontario families. Some 14,727 units have already been created or are on their way under the Canada-Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Mr. Rick Johnson: My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, Bill 242, introduced to provide the next step in establishing full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds in the province, passed third reading on April 27. The full-day learning program has seen wide-spread support, but the member from Nepean—Carleton and her caucus colleagues have been very vocal in their

opposition to the plan. Their perception is that parents will not have a choice in sending their children to full- or half-day kindergarten. They say that with the full-day learning program in place, parents will lose the choice to have their children in school for half days.

Minister, are you taking away choice from parents who wish to have their children enrolled in kindergarten for only half the day?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I thank the honourable member for the question because I think that some parents do have questions. I think it's also important to reaffirm that parents always have a choice when it comes to their children until they are six years of age. It is important that I would clarify that kindergarten is optional under the Education Act.

Schools that offer the early learning program will only implement the full-day learning program with an extended-day option. So whether the children attend the extended-day programming is up to the parents.

Also, if a parent wishes to send their child to a school that has a full-day program but wishes their child to attend half-time, they are able to do that. The choice is entirely up to the parent. We respect that and certainly—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Johnson: Minister, I appreciate the clarification.

Continuing on the theme of choice, I think we can also understand that the before- and after-school program proposed may not fit the lifestyles and choices of all families. Some may want to pick up their children right after the school portion, while others may not be able to get away from work until a little later and may need to make better use of the after-school programming.

During third reading debate on Bill 242, the member from Dufferin—Caledon quoted a memo from the early learning division ADM that parents with children not taking part in the after-school program would be receiving homework. Minister, echoing the sentiments of the member from Dufferin—Caledon, don't you think that fourand five-year-olds are a little too young to be receiving homework?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I do appreciate having the opportunity to clarify this very important issue. Of course, we're not expecting kindergarten children to do homework. But what we have heard from parents who would not perhaps be able, for a range of reasons, to have their children in the extended-day program is that they're very curious about what experiences their children might be missing. What we have done is we have developed some material for parents, should they want to be sure that their children have the same kinds of experiences in their own home or with another caregiver that those in the extended day will have. We have provided some materials that are certainly optional for parents. It will provide parents with guidance about complementary learning activities if they wish to use that with their children. It's totally—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

ABATTOIRS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Minister, "Small Abattoirs an Endangered Species": That's the headline in the Regional Country News. The Owen Sound Sun Times says, "Small Butchers on Chopping Block." The Toronto Star says, "Closures would be a blow to the local food movement."

Minister, that's the situation in rural Ontario. If you care so much about local food and food safety, why, according to your estimates, are you spending \$4.3 million less this year to help small abattoirs reach those regulations that you imposed upon them?

1120

Hon. Carol Mitchell: I thank you for the question. We do support local food because we recognize how important local food is, not only for our agricultural community but for our agriculture commodities as well.

We have committed over \$65 million into local food. You know what? It's making a difference. The brand today of Ontario Foodland has 96% acceptance. People want to buy Ontario food. It is a brand they can count on, and food safety is an important component of that. That is why the brand has such strong recognition.

I look forward in the supplementary to speaking specifically to the abattoirs.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I just want to point out that this minister speaks about making a difference. I want to tell you that the difference your actions are making on small abattoirs is not of a positive nature.

Actually, Minister, your government announced \$25.3 million for small abattoirs, but according to the public accounts and estimates documents you have spent only \$17.5 million. Over a quarter of that money that you are taking credit for never actually went out the door.

Now that you have been found out, will you apologize to the small abattoirs and use the rest of the money that you announced to help them, or are you writing off the remaining abattoirs in small-town Ontario?

Hon. Carol Mitchell: Certainly we recognize that small abattoirs are important to our rural communities. That is why we committed to the \$25 million. But I want to say, too, that meat inspection is an important component of local food. You fired meat inspectors; we hired meat inspectors. The brand recognition is about food safety.

We are working with our abattoirs to reach the compliance. Deb Stark, who was appointed chief veterinarian, is talking directly. It is an important component, and food safety is what makes our local brands successful. We will continue to work with our abattoirs in order for them to provide the services that our rural communities are very supportive of—in the past and in the future.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. This morning, I was at Toronto city hall where I joined my Toronto colleagues to sign a petition supporting the

Transit City vision. As the details emerge of a revised construction timetable, it is very clear that this vision has been dealt a crippling blow by the McGuinty government's \$4-billion cut to transit funding. LRT lines will be dramatically shortened and the completion dates will be pushed back five years or more, if they ever get built.

Torontonians are left wondering why the Premier is so wilfully destroying their city's vision for better public transit.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I actually think that one of the things Torontonians are wondering is why the NDP wouldn't be supporting public transit; why the NDP wouldn't be working with their city hall counterparts and encouraging them to work with us to make sure the plan works; why the NDP has a member who has voted against and has opposed the Union-Pearson link, has opposed the development of that transit in the west end of Toronto; and why the NDP doesn't understand that delaying funding over 10 years instead of finishing in eight years is just that. It's spreading money over a slightly longer period of time, but we will be going ahead within that 10 years on all of the projects that have been planned.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The NDP is the only party in this Legislature that supports the full construction of Transit City by the original timelines. The NDP is the only party in this Legislature that stands with the residents of the Eglinton corridor, who have waited for decades already for a dedicated transit line that would reduce gridlock and pollution. New Democrats are the only ones. We support Transit City 100% because it is good for the economy and good for the environment.

When will this Premier and his transportation minister realize the folly of this \$4-billion cut and immediately deliver what they've already promised and committed to?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There is work under way right now. When the leader of the NDP talks about delivering right now, there's work going on right now. In fact, there's work going on in the west end of Toronto that the member for Parkdale–High Park has tried to block at every single turn. In 2007, the NDP voted against the budget, which included MoveOntario 2020. The NDP has consistently opposed transit building in this city.

The reality is that we have had to delay this funding. The reality is that it was the responsible and prudent thing for us to do in our budget, to make a decision to spread our funding over a slightly longer period of time—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. The member from Parkdale-High Park.

New question.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. This

week is Emergency Preparedness Week in Ontario and across Canada. The daily news reminds us all too well that emergencies can happen to anyone at any time without warning. While we think it can never happen to us, you may remember the tornado that struck Vaughan last year, and back in 1954, Toronto and my community of York South-Weston were struck by a devastating hurricane, Hurricane Hazel. Just imagine: The Humber River in Weston rose six metres; 4,000 people were left homeless; 32 had to wait to be rescued from flooding on the roof of a single home; 81 people died. This is an example of why it's necessary to be ready.

Can the minister tell us what our government is doing for Emergency Preparedness Week and what we are

doing to help-

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: The member is correct: While Ontario is a very safe place to live, work, play and grow in, we always have to be ready in the event of an emergency.

Emergency Management Ontario is the government's first line of support in an emergency. They coordinate the government's response, but they are vital in the prevention and in the recovery strategies to maximize the safety and security of Ontarians as well. I commend them for their work.

This year, our ministry is putting Ontarians to the test by asking them to visit www.ontario.ca/beprepared. There is a challenge that consists of a series of quizzes for all ages. We encourage Ontarians to take it to see how prepared they are.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Sup-

plementary?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you, Minister. I encourage my constituents to take the emergency preparedness challenge.

We are told that the first 72 hours are a crucial time in the wake of an emergency. There's no doubt that our emergency responders do an excellent job, but during the first 72 hours, there's a chance they might not be able to help and assist everyone. If families are able to support themselves for that 72-hour time frame, then our emergency responders can better focus their efforts on helping those who are most in need. That's why it's essential that all Ontarians have an emergency plan for themselves, their families and even their pets.

Minister, what should Ontarians do to be properly prepared in case of an emergency, especially for those first 72 hours?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: The member asked a very good and very important question. In an emergency situation, emergency response resources and first responders may be stretched thin, so families should be prepared to take care of themselves for at least 72 hours. Being prepared means having an emergency plan in place for your family, for your pets, as well as compiling an emergency survival kit that is always ready to go and is built to last for three days.

Unfortunately, only 12% of Ontario families have an emergency preparedness kit. Part of this education is to encourage Ontarians to put that kit together. That is a personal kit. It will differ from family to family, but it has to last those first 72 hours.

ENERGY RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Minister, when your government tabled its budget, the CARP advocacy group for seniors reviewed the impact of smart meters. They pointed out that for older persons who have to stay home all day and need the heat or air conditioning or have medical equipment hooked up, energy consumption during the peak periods is not an option. The impact of your smart meters on disabled and elderly persons is just wrong.

Recently, the member for Durham received an email from a constituent of his whose spouse has MS and requires their home air conditioning to be on 24/7. Understandably, this family is worried about the cost of peak electricity.

Minister, only yesterday the Premier finally admitted that the HST will cost taxpayers more. Will you admit that your smart meters are a hardship for disabled Ontarians and will you explain what you will do to help disabled Ontarians pay their electricity—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

1130

Hon. Brad Duguid: I thank the member for the question. I can say that there is no evidence to suggest that there are any facts to what the member is saying at all. This is a new program. We're going to continue to monitor the impacts and the advantages that time-of-use has for our people and our users and our consumers here in this province. But what time-of-use does is it gives our consumers an opportunity to participate in the efforts that we're trying to make to conserve energy, to move from peak energy times of use to off-peak times of use. It gives them an opportunity to contribute to that. Why are we doing this? We're doing this because together, we have to make sure that we're doing all we can to make up for the lack of investment that you made in the energy sector during your time in office seven years ago. I'll have more to say about that in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure: Minister, a constituent of mine, Alvin Mielke, suffers from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. He has to be on oxygen 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In hot, humid weather, his breathing is heavily impeded and he must run his air conditioning—under doctor's orders. Alvin Mielke is a pensioner on a fixed, low-income pension. Your so-called smart meters are going to whack him with substantially higher hydro bills, because Alvin doesn't have the option of not breathing for 16 hours a day. And if that weren't bad enough,

you're going to whack him with your greedy 8% HST tax grab on his hydro bill as well.

Minister, what are you going to do for Ontarians like Alvin, with chronic health conditions, who will be especially hard-hit by your so-called smart meters and your HST?

Hon. Brad Duguid: We're very sensitive to the needs of low-income Ontarians when it comes to all of the challenges they face. We recognize that in a time of rising energy rates, low-income consumers need to be considered. That's why, in the recent budget, we've put forward an energy tax credit that's going to be of great advantage to help offset some of those costs.

There are a number of conservation measures as well that we're moving forward on aggressively. We're doing more in the area of conservation than any government has before us. We know there's still more work to do, but we need to work with all Ontarians, whether they're low-income Ontarians, high-income Ontarians, middle-income Ontarians; whether they're seniors or young people. Every Ontarian has to join this effort to work together to bring down our use of energy, to ensure that we do all we can to work together to bring down the cost of energy. This is a—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Health. My community hospital is in crisis. Toronto East General Hospital, by the minister's own admission, is one of the best community hospitals in Ontario. On March 26, when I asked a question about this hospital, the minister said, "The era of unaffordable rates of increase for hospitals—those days are over." Now we see how this government is finding those savings: by starving our local hospital and forcing them to lay off more than 120 nurses, from medical surgical units, the complex and continuing care unit, the family birthing centre and the pediatric unit. Why is this government turning its back on quality health care in my community?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would hardly call the rate of increase in hospital funding "starving hospitals." Just for the member's interest, hospital funding in Ontario has gone from \$10.9 billion in 2003-04 to \$16.3 billion in 2010-11. That's almost a 50% increase in that period of time. That is a substantial increase in funding. As we look forward in our health care system, we simply must make choices about how we're going to bring down the rate of increase when it comes to health care spending. Hospitals are, of course, a very, very important part of our health care system. The more we can deliver outside hospitals, the better our health care system will be.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: The minister's choices are not good choices. There is no justification of this government's wrong-headed scheme to decimate our local hospitals. Each full-time-equivalent RN position that is elim-

inated equals 1,950 fewer hours of care per year. Considering the 120 nurses, that's a stunning 234,000 hours of care that will be cut from patients at Toronto East General. Research shows that every extra patient added to the workload of a registered nurse increases the rate of complications and patient deaths by 7%.

It is not too late for this minister to order Toronto East General Hospital to recall the pink slips. Will the government respect our community and keep our RNs—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I understand that the member opposite represents a party whose solution to every problem is to just keep spending more money. We actually take a different approach. I introduced legislation earlier this week that will really turn the focus to making sure we get the very best quality in our hospitals. We know that by getting higher quality, improved quality, we actually will be able to get better value for the money that we spend in health care.

This is a time of change in health care, make no mistake about it. Hospitals are such an important part of our health care system. That's why we're working so closely with them to improve the value of the money that we do spend in hospitals.

I was very pleased, when I made the announcement on this legislation, that I was joined by the Ontario Hospital Association, the Ontario Medical Association and the registered nurses of Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Mr. Glen R. Murray: My question is to the Minister of Revenue. There have been dozens of harmonized sales tax studies undertaken since the 2009 budget. The vast majority of these studies have been done by independent third parties and the vast majority of those have found the HST will be largely revenue-neutral.

A report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has found that the HST, our comprehensive package, will leave families in a wide range of incomes—\$30,000 to \$90,000—better off, on average. They went on to say that Ontario families with the lowest incomes—\$10,000 to \$20,000—will be better off by about \$119.

My constituents want to know who they can believe. Would the minister please tell us if the—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank the member for the question. Late breaking news: Yesterday, when I was asked by the press, I said that I had some questions until I could see the assumptions used by the NDP in their report. I think the Premier was right to question the mathematics. So I'd say to my friends in the press, maybe the questions for the NDP should be: Why did you ignore some \$4.3 billion in transitional relief? Why did you underestimate the personal income tax savings? Why

did you conveniently ignore \$1.5 billion worth of pointof-sale exemptions? And oh, yeah, why do you disagree with the Toronto-Dominion Bank, which says the passthrough is \$5 billion? You said it was only \$1 billion. Those are really good questions that the Toronto Star will have for you today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Thank you.

Interjections.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I cannot—point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can barely hear over the party that wants to jack sales tax by 1%, and 2% in Nova Scotia.

Jim Stanford, with the Canadian Auto Workers Union, has said, "Political opposition to the HST does not reflect a well-considered call for a fairer tax system. It's more about electoral gamesmanship by opposition parties eager to damage the current government."

Further, Jim Stanford does not recommend that CAW locals, retired chapters or activists participate in anti-HST

activities.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister

Hon. John Wilkinson: It gives me an opportunity to explain to the good people exactly what part of the measures the NDP and the Conservatives voted against. They decided that the people with the lowest income in this province should not get the HST rebate starting in August—some \$260 for qualifying adults and children. They voted against that. We now have the lowest personal income tax rate on the first \$37,000 worth of income. They voted against that. Some 90,000 fewer people are on the income tax rolls because of our tax reforms. They voted against that. They voted against the fact that there is some \$4.3 billion worth of transition payments. They didn't think that was a good idea. We voted for that. Why? Because on this side of the House we have a plan to attract \$47 billion worth of new investment in this province, to create 591,000 jobs. On that side of the House they said, "Don't get the investment and don't get the jobs." We-

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

1140

TOBACCO CONTROL

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. What steps are you taking to protect consumers, particularly those under 19, from the growing threat of illegal tobacco use? What leadership have you shown at the cabinet table for those under 19 who are consumers?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I say to the member—I think it's something we all agree—there are people in our soci-

ety who manufacture and sell contraband tobacco to our children. There is no room in Ontario for those people. They need to understand that our government believes that those people who are doing that need to have the fullest extent of our Tobacco Tax Act brought to bear against them. That's why in five of the last seven budgets we have reformed our Tobacco Tax Act to ensure that people understand that if they are purveying poison to our children there will be no sympathy, there will be no mercy from our government.

I want to thank the member for raising the question. It is a serious one. It is so important for us to work in common cause with the federal government, with the US government and with the province of Quebec. I can tell the member that we are working very closely with other jurisdictions as we work to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: My colleague from York Simcoe just recently asked a question to the minister of consumer protection on a consumer protection issue and she did not answer; she placed it to another minister, who is unrelated to the issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That is not a point of order. As the member knows, any minister can refer a question to another minister.

USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Ted Arnott: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: During question period this morning, you disallowed my question to the Minister of Finance. While I would never question the Chair's impartiality or the professionalism of the table, I would again submit that my question on the obstruction of MPPs on budget day was, in fact, in order.

In my 20 years in this place, I can't recall one instance of a question involving a matter that was before a standing committee, as you correctly stated this is, to be out of order. In fact, the matter before a standing committee is by definition a matter that is likely to be ultimately decided by the House as a whole and, as such, is business before the House.

I realize that during my question the government members started to loudly heckle and it may have been difficult for you and the table to hear exactly what I had said. That being the case, I would respectfully request that you review the relevant Hansard and reconsider your ruling.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the honourable member for his point of order. The ruling of the Speaker stands, that this is a matter that is best dealt with by the committee. We will have the opportunity to come back to the House with it.

Mr. Paul Miller: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm just making the House aware that I called for a late show because I didn't get an answer from the minister—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I will assist the honourable member in that regard because I will be making an announcement shortly.

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like all members to join me in welcoming to the Legislature today Gary Malkowski, the former member from York East in the 35th Parliament. Gary was in the gallery earlier with some guests. He is in the building. Please say hello to him. Welcome today.

I'd like to take this opportunity as well to introduce and welcome the Millwood Junior School to the Legislature today. We hope that they enjoy their observations of Queen's Park.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome the parents of the new member from Leeds-Grenville. They are joining us today: Cathy Clark and Horst Pijhan. Welcome, to the two of you, to Queen's Park today.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek has given notice of his dissatisfaction to the answer to his question given by the Minister of Labour concerning the WSIB. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

PENSION BENEFITS AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES RÉGIMES DE RETRAITE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 236, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Act / Projet de loi 236, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les régimes de retraite.

The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith has moved third reading of Bill 236, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Act. All those in favour will please rise one at a time to be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia Albanese, Laura Arnott, Ted Arthurs, Wayne Balkissoon, Bas Barrett, Toby Bartolucci, Rick Bentley, Christopher Best, Margarett Bradley, James J. Broten, Laurel C. Brown, Michael A. Cansfield, Donna H. Caplan, David Chan, Michael Chudleigh, Ted Clark, Steve Colle, Mike

Gravelle, Michael Hampton, Howard Hardeman, Emie Horwath, Andrea Hoskins, Eric Hoy, Pat Jaczek, Helena Jeffrey, Linda Johnson, Rick Klees Frank Kormos, Peter Kwinter, Monte Leal, Jeff Levac, Dave MacLeod, Lisa Marchese, Rosario Martiniuk, Gerry Matthews, Deborah

Orazietti, David Ouellette, Jerry J. Pendergast, Leeanna Phillips, Gerry Prue, Michael Pupatello, Sandra Ramal, Khalil Ramsay, David Rinaldi, Lou Ruprecht, Tony Sandals, Liz Sergio, Mario Shurman, Peter Smith, Monigue Sorbara, Gred Sousa, Charles Sterling, Norman W. Tabuns, Peter

Crozier, Bruce Dickson, Joe DiNovo, Cheri Dombrowsky, Leona Duguid, Brad Duncan, Dwight Elliott, Christine Flynn, Kevin Daniel Fonseca, Peter Gerretsen, John

McGuinty, Dalton McNeely, Phil Meilleur, Madeleine Miller, Norm Miller, Paul Milloy, John Mitchell, Carol Munro, Julia Murray, Glen R. Naqvi, Yasir Takhar, Harinder S. Van Bommel, Maria Wilkinson, John Wilson, Jim Witmer, Elizabeth Wynne, Kathleen O. Yakabuski, John Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 82; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1153 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I am absolutely delighted today to be able to introduce in both the east and west galleries members of the Canadian music business. They are here because they want to celebrate the accomplishments of the winners of the international singing contest. I'm delighted to introduce some people who are the backbone of this institution. They are Orlando Medeiros, Mr. Helder Costa, Mr. Joe Amorim, Andrew Amorim, Mr. Zack Werner, who is a judge in the Canadian Idol contest, and Mr. John Santos. Thank you, congratulations and the very best to you.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to welcome, in the Speaker's gallery today, Lynn Morrison, our Integrity Commissioner, and Valerie Jepson, counsel at the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. Welcome today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CANADA 55+ GAMES

Mr. Steve Clark: The Canada 55+ Games is a nation-wide program designed to sponsor wellness among Canadians 55 years of age and older. The first national games were held in Regina in 1996. This event brings together recreational athletes who participate for the sheer joy of competition, for the opportunity to visit other parts of Canada and for the camaraderie and social interaction that are an integral and essential part of the games.

I'm honoured to say that this year from August 23 to 28 the games will be hosted in Brockville and the Thousand Islands region and will bring together nearly 2,000 participants in 23 events. These groups earn the right to compete as a result of competition against thousands of

other seniors in their home province or territory. It is estimated that nearly 250,000 people 55 years of age and older are competing at the local level across Canada.

This is the first time in the games' history that Ontario will act as host province. Event sites in 2010 include the communities of Brockville, Gananoque, Prescott, Smiths Falls and the township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands.

The games organizing committee, or GOC, has a very capable staff led by executive director Laurence Bishop and strong leadership by games chairman David Dargie. This year's honorary chairman is none other than Senator Bob Runciman.

Congratulations to the GOC, their staff and our community for securing the games for Ontario. I'm so pleased to have the event in my riding.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. David Caplan: I rise today to mark the 95th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. April 24, 1915, was the start of a planned and systematic campaign to eradicate the Armenian people. One and a half million Armenian men, women and children were brutally murdered. At the time, the world community sat idle and did nothing.

The stage was set for other genocides and human tragedies. In fact, upon unveiling his final solution for the Jewish people, Adolf Hitler noted to his aides that the world would not even lift a finger because, in his words, "Who today remembers the Armenians?"

What is doubly tragic about the Armenian genocide is that today much of the world refuses to acknowledge the horrific events. The perpetrators still deny the truth.

Last month, I was truly honoured to stand in remembrance with colleagues from the Legislature and members of my community during the 95th commemoration of the Armenian genocide at the Armenian Community Centre in my riding of Don Valley East. I was proud to participate in a candlelight vigil organized by the Armenian youth of Toronto here on the grounds of the Legislative Assembly.

Recent events around the world will give members of our Legislature pause to remember the human tragedy of genocide and to give the survivors of this horror the recognition they seek and deserve.

LIBERATION OF THE NETHERLANDS

Mrs. Julia Munro: Today in Bradford, in my riding, the Dutch flag will be raised to commemorate Liberation Day, the 65th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands.

On May 5, 1945, Lieutenant General Charles Foulkes, commander of the First Canadian Corps, made up of Canadian and Allied troops, accepted the surrender of German forces in the Netherlands. The surrender came after months of bitter fighting against the Nazis as Allied forces advanced from Normandy to the Rhine.

We must remember that the liberation not only brought freedom but saved the lives of perhaps hundreds of thousands of Dutch people. The harsh winter of 1944-45 in the Netherlands is remembered as the Hunger Winter. Bridges and dikes were blown up, and much of the farmland was destroyed. In Amsterdam, by February 1945, the average adult lived on 580 calories a day. More than 10,000 people died directly of hunger before liberation. Many more died with hunger as a contributing cause.

Remembering these facts helps us understand the depth of feeling that people of the Netherlands demonstrate in commemorating Liberation Day and honouring the Canadian and Allied soldiers involved in the liberation

CANADIAN HEARING SOCIETY

Mr. Michael Prue: I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Canadian Hearing Society to the Legislature today. Earlier today you introduced former member Gary Malkowski, who was here with them as well.

We have had the pleasure in the last hour or so of meeting with their representatives to discuss the importance of visual alarms for fire and carbon monoxide detectors for culturally deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing Ontarians.

Today, the Canadian Hearing Society has come to this House to seek all-party support for providing life-saving visual fire and carbon monoxide alarms that would alert those who are culturally deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing in the event of an emergency, fire or carbon monoxide overload. This would obviously greatly increase safety and independence for many people across the province.

I agree with the CHS and want to state our caucus's support for including these visual alarms under the assistive devices program so that people who need them can receive some degree of financial support. The ADP already provides support for many devices that help people live more independently. We also support amending the Ontario fire code to include visual fire alarms along with audible alarms. This is a matter of personal safety.

I would hope that the government will listen to what has to be said here today from the deaf community. I would encourage all members who have not yet had the opportunity to speak with CHS to come to the reception today at 5 o'clock and be educated on this very important initiative that they are taking.

CANADIAN PARAPLEGIC ASSOCIATION ONTARIO

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: It's a pleasure to rise today and speak about a fantastic awareness initiative that I will be undertaking right here at Queen's Park.

Next Wednesday, May 12, is the Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario's Chair-Leaders event at Queen's Park. Chair-Leaders is an awareness initiative in which individuals voluntarily agree to spend a day using a wheelchair. Being a Chair-Leader highlights the need for accessibility for all residents in Ontario.

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Coming from an urban riding, accessibility is a priority for my constituents in Ottawa Centre and a topic that I feel very strongly about. That is why I have agreed to partake in the Chair-Leaders event happening on May 12 at Oueen's Park.

CPA Ontario is a great organization that assists persons with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities to achieve independence, self-reliance and full community participation. CPA Ontario also assists communities to identify, reduce and eliminate barriers for disabled persons. I applaud their hard work and thank them for coming to Queen's Park next Wednesday. I implore all members of this House to contact Chair-Leaders and partake in this fantastic event so that together we can help raise awareness of accessibility issues in Ontario.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Mr. John O'Toole: From May 2 to 9, Ontario observes Children's Mental Health Week. One in five children has a mental health problem. That's a total of half a million children facing disorders such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar and other conditions. Children's Mental Health Week is all about increasing our awareness and understanding, while decreasing the stigma for children suffering from these conditions, as well as their families.

It is a reminder to all children and families that help is available and treatment does work. Kiosks in shopping malls, school plays, open houses, workshops and video contests are among the initiatives that will support children facing mental illness and demonstrate that Ontario cares.

I would like to pay tribute to the professionals who work in the children's mental health field, including the agencies in my riding—Kinark Child and Family Services and Frontenac Youth Services—and in many of your ridings. These organizations help families in my riding and yours. Please support Children's Mental Health Week, and please make children's mental health a priority year-round.

SINGING COMPETITION

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Both galleries are filled with people who are important to the Canadian music business. Last month, 400 guests had the great pleasure to attend the international amateur singing contest. It was a truly Canadian multicultural event. What I saw and experienced touched me deeply. The evening's program was designed to showcase the real talent of each performer. Mr. Santos, an accomplished music director, and

his wife, Lisa, set the stage for a most supportive back-drop.

John's music lifted the spirits of the performers to such heights, which enabled all of them to soar and to shine, to give their best and to give of themselves. The audience too was thus transformed into a supportive and appreciative cast. The rhythmic music—sometimes soft, sometimes powerful, sometimes light—the colourful light and the uplifting, warm, melodious voices produced such a marvellous sound that time was forgotten and people didn't even want to go home. Some shouted, "More, more."

It was a truly important night to remember. These fine singers are Canada's pride and joy. They deserve to be recognized for their enormous talent, and I would be delighted to provide some opportunity so they could launch their careers and bring joy to the lives of an even wider audience than here in Ontario.

I'm happy to introduce some of them to you and to the people of Ontario. The winner in the junior finals is Maisy Vause; second place, Marissa Gilson. The winner of the adult final category is Veronica Domingues, and in second place, Adrianne Marcucci.

We want to thank them, and we congratulate all of them, because they have achieved and done us proud.

CANADIAN HEARING SOCIETY

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: Today I have the honour of sponsoring a reception here at Queen's Park that is being held by the Canadian Hearing Society to highlight the need for visual fire alarms. If I could, I'd like to recognize our sign language interpreters on the floor of the Legislature today as well for the work they're doing.

Founded in 1940, the Canadian Hearing Society is the leading provider of services, products and information that remove barriers to communication, advance hearing health and promote equity for people who are culturally deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing in Ontario.

Unique in North America, the Canadian Hearing Society offers an integral roster of essential services, including a number of health and social services, through 26 offices in Ontario.

This day is important for all of us, as it is a day to break down barriers to communication and accessibility for those who suffer from hearing disorders.

Canadian families from coast to coast have been affected by hearing loss, and my family has been no exception. I know first-hand the difficulties that individuals and families endure because of hearing loss.

On two occasions in this House I have introduced a private member's bill calling for the implementation of visual fire alarms, and later this month will be tabling a similar bill for the third time. In the past, this bill has had the support of all political parties and the support of the general public.

The Canadian Hearing Society is holding today's reception to highlight the need for visual fire alarms. I ask that all of us here today attend the reception and hear

and see what the introduction of visual fire alarms means to all those in Ontario who are impaired because of hearing loss

CANADA-ISRAEL RELATIONS

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Sixty years ago, on May 11, 1949, Israel and Canada established diplomatic relations and began building a fruitful co-operation. Over the years, our countries have stood by each other and have continually strengthened their commitment as partners and friends in many fields, including commerce, health, science and technology, culture, education, public safety and trade.

This past April, Canada Post issued an international rate commemorative stamp to celebrate Canada's strong bilateral relationship with Israel. The stamp, which marks the first joint issue between Canada and Israel, had its first-day cover cancelled in both countries' capital cities.

A key strength of Canada's and Israel's partnership is the extensive network of social bonds—from Canada's large Jewish community, which stands at about 350,000, to Israeli-Canadian dual citizens—that have given rise to co-operation on many fronts, including culture, education, business and tourism.

These strong informal ties have inspired the design for the stamp, which features a group of human figures formed in the shapes of Canada's maple leaf and Israel's Star of David. These people come together to meet in the middle, a meeting that symbolizes and celebrates the 60 years of friendship that the two countries have shared.

What could be a more symbolic and fitting way to express 60 years of co-operation and friendship between Israel and Canada than a joint stamp issue, the merging of both countries' paper ambassadors?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MEMBERS' INTEGRITY AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'INTÉGRITÉ DES DÉPUTÉS

Ms. Smith moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 50, An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur l'intégrité des députés.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The minister for a short statement?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I will defer my statement until we debate the bill later today.

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (PUPILS WITH DIABETES), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI DE L'ÉDUCATION (ÉLÈVES DIABÉTIQUES)

Mr. Martiniuk moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 51, An Act to amend the Education Act to allow pupils with diabetes in schools to receive certain monitoring and treatment / Projet de loi 51, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation pour permettre aux élèves diabétiques dans les écoles de recevoir un suivi et un traitement.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement?

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I dedicate this bill to the Bordman family and their three daughters; the twins, Jade and Brooke, having diabetes.

The bill amends the Education Act so that all staff members in an elementary or secondary school who have regular contact with pupils in the school who have or may have diabetes are required to have the necessary training to provide monitoring and treatment of those pupils. Those staff members are authorized to provide monitoring and treatment to any pupil who has or may have diabetes if they have reason to believe the pupil is suffering a medical emergency. I should add that the bill would provide protection for anyone who acts within the jurisdiction of this bill.

1520

ALZHEIMER ADVISORY
COUNCIL ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 CRÉANT
LE CONSEIL CONSULTATIF
DE LA MALADIE D'ALZHEIMER

Mrs. Cansfield moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 52, An Act to establish the Alzheimer Advisory Council and develop a strategy for the research, treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia / Projet de loi 52, Loi créant le Conseil consultatif de la maladie d'Alzheimer et élaborant une stratégie de traitement et de prévention de la maladie d'Alzheimer et d'autres formes de démence et de recherche en la matière.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: My co-sponsors are the member from Whitby-Oshawa and the member from Parkdale-High Park.

Dementia is a syndrome that affects a person's ability to function and includes loss of memory, judgment and changes in mood and behaviour. Alzheimer's disease is a progressive degenerative disease of the brain which causes thinking or memory to become impaired and may cause changes in behaviours or abilities.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, accounting for 64% of all dementia in Canada. By the year 2008, we had a population of 480,600 people with this disease. As Ontario's population ages, this will continue as we have the greatest number in our population.

Early diagnosis and treatment can lead to positive health, and many risk factors can be treated to prevent or delay. The physical, emotional and monetary costs of all forms of dementia must be addressed.

ESCAPING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA FUITE FACE À LA VIOLENCE FAMILIALE

Mr. Naqvi moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 53, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 with respect to domestic violence / Projet de loi 53, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation à l'égard de la violence familiale.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: This bill amends the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, to shorten the period of notice required to terminate a tenancy in cases where the tenant or a dependent child of the tenant is the victim of domestic violence.

RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS FOR EMPLOYEES AND SELF-EMPLOYED PERSONS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LES RÉGIMES D'ÉPARGNE-RETRAITE DES EMPLOYÉS ET DES TRAVAILLEURS INDÉPENDANTS

Mr. Leal moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 54, An Act respecting retirement savings plans for employees and for self-employed persons / Projet de loi 54, Loi traitant des régimes d'épargne-retraite des employés et des travailleurs indépendants.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Under a new section 44.1 of the Employment Standards Act, 2000, employers with 20 or more employees in Ontario are required to provide retirement savings plans for their employees. Details are set out concerning the types of retirement savings plans that

will be permitted. When employees are hired, they automatically become members of the plan and are required to make contributions. However, employees may opt out of the plan at any time. The terms of the plan may provide for periodic increases in the plan members' annual contribution rate up to a specified maximum rate or amount.

Amendments to the Pension Benefits Act authorize the establishment of a new type of pension plan, called a defined contribution multi-employer pension plan. This type of pension plan must be established and administered by an insurer or a prescribed type of financial institution. The pension plan must provide defined contribution benefits. Employers may register as participating employers in the pension plan. Sole proprietorships and partnerships may also register as participating employers. Membership in the plan is available to employees of the participating employers and is also available to the proprietor of a sole proprietorship and the partners of a partnership. Employer contributions to the pension plan, if any, are locked in if the Income Tax Act (Canada) so provides.

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (ORGAN DONATION EDUCATION), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION (ÉDUCATION SUR LE DON D'ORGANES)

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 55, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to education on organ donation / Projet de loi 55, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation à l'égard de l'éducation sur le don d'organes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement?

Mr. Dave Levac: From the explanatory note: The bill amends the Education Act by permitting the minister to establish an organ donation education policy framework, and to require that boards include education on the importance of organ donation in the curriculum of students in the senior division such that every student, subject to certain exceptions, who receives the Ontario secondary school diploma will have learned the importance of organ donation.

BREAST CANCER SCREENING ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE DÉPISTAGE DU CANCER DU SEIN

Mr. Orazietti moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 56, An Act to increase access to breast cancer screening / Projet de loi 56, Loi visant à accroître l'accès aux services de dépistage du cancer du sein. The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement?

Mr. David Orazietti: The bill requires that the minister ensure that breast screening services are provided free of charge to women 40 to 49 years of age who are referred by a physician or a specified nurse. The breast screening services may be provided through the Ontario breast screening program of Cancer Care Ontario or that program's successor.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed. Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 22 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the deferral of the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek's late show to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, May 11, 2010.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed. Hon. Monique M. Smith: Shall I move that motion? *Interjection*.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Okay. We're fine?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is there consent to defer the late show? Agreed? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

ROBERT MITCHELL

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in remembrance of the late Bob Mitchell.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed. Member from Trinity—Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I rise on behalf of New Democrats to recognize Robert Mitchell. Like many members past and present, Robert was a dedicated public servant with a long and distinguished record of service. His service began in the public sector, where he worked as a civil servant. He then moved into municipal politics for nine years, before being elected as MPP for the

people of Nepean in 1980. This long history of service gave him a unique insight into both the legislative and administrative sides of the political process, and informed his activities here in the House as a backbencher, cabinet minister and opposition member.

1530

As members, one of the greatest compliments we can receive is an acknowledgment that we gave it our best and that, yes, indeed, we have fought for the interests of our community. Mitchell was particularly well known for his advocacy and support of the Queensway Carleton Hospital throughout his career, and strongly believed in the work that they did to make the community a better place. So it was fitting that he demonstrated his faith and confidence in his local hospital by choosing them as his partner in the difficult fight against cancer. As a fierce supporter of the home team, he would have it no other way.

As a proud resident of Nepean, Mitchell's career was characterized by his commitment to his community. He understood the importance of public service and knew it was an immense privilege and an even greater responsibility. He believed in the people and the potential of the communities he had the honour of serving, and demonstrated his commitment to them in this House and at the cabinet table.

Like the vast majority of us who have the privilege of serving here at Queen's Park, much of Mitchell's success as an MPP and in life can be attributed to the support and sacrifices made by his family, many of whom are here today. Each of us has a story to share about the contributions that our loved ones have made to our ability to serve, and he was no different. New Democrats thank the Mitchell family for the important role that they played in making Robert's contribution to Nepean and to Ontario possible, and we thank Robert Mitchell for his service to the community, the province and the country.

Hon. James J. Bradley: It's a privilege for me to pay tribute to another colleague who is no longer with us but who served in a very distinguished manner in this House.

You always try to picture—when the notice came out that Bob had passed away, you try to picture the person back then. There's an excellent picture, actually—I know we're not supposed to have props—of Bob right here in material I was looking at. I understood that he was a community man from the beginning, and obviously a family man. I noticed that one of the comments from a member of the family was that, "He wasn't a slick guy. He was just a dad who got involved in politics, someone who cared about his community. I now measure all politicians by the standards he set,' Robin Sparks said yesterday." That was at the time of the notice of his passing.

I can remember Bob very well. He was a person who was outgoing with all members of the House. It was a different tradition probably when he served. It was much more collegial in the House, for whatever reason—the timing of the House sittings and so on. Bob was always one I had an opportunity to chat with, on a very informal basis, on a non-partisan basis, about many of the issues.

He served on some very significant committees. People who are out there watching what goes on in the House probably don't recognize how important the committees are, the role that a person can play in a committee. Bob was always extremely well prepared when he was there and made a contribution, asked the appropriate questions of people when there was a public hearing type of committee. He was on the government agencies committee and administration of justice. He served in the cabinet as well, which was yet another opportunity, and was a parliamentary assistant and very capable in that field.

Being from Ottawa, of course, and with the special interest of his, he was very aware of the new high-tech industry that was sweeping Ottawa. It was probably in its initial stages when he was in government. He was very enthusiastic about it, and I think the Premier appropriately gave him responsibilities in that regard.

But as with most of us who served at the local level, his heart never left the local level of government. He had served municipally in a couple of different capacities. That always grounds all of us. It really tells us what the needs are at the local level. People will approach their local politicians without reservation. They call them about what you might consider to be minor items, but to those people, they are not minor items. Bob always recognized that no matter how insignificant the problem sounded, perhaps, to the general public or members of the Legislature, to that individual it was exceedingly important.

His name appears on a number of plaques around the greater community of Ottawa as well, because he made a significant contribution.

It mentions, for instance, that he "passed away ... at the Queensway Carleton Hospital after a battle with stomach cancer.

"It's not lost on his family that Mitchell died in the hospital he played a key role in creating—from the financing and planning to its construction."

So you can see that his fingerprints, if you will—and I say that in a positive sense in this case—are on so many of the important projects in his riding of Carleton and certainly in the entire Ottawa area.

Norm Sterling and I, who have been around a few years in this House, remember Bob extremely well. Again, he was a person who was not afraid to buck the trend at the most appropriate times. Obviously, we have to be loyal to our governments and so on. That's exceedingly important, and certainly the people around the hierarchy believe that to be the case. But he wasn't afraid to express his views on issues of significance to his particular riding.

He and I share something else in common. We're both members of the United Church of Canada. That is something to be positive about. I know all of you who are members of the United Church would agree with me in that regard.

Families always have to make sacrifices; the members do themselves. But once again, we thank yet another family, in this case the family of Bob Mitchell, for allowing him to be part of the provincial scene of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, serving his constituents in this province in such a distinguished manner.

We certainly convey our greatest sympathy. I know it has been a few years since he passed away, but we still send our condolences and thank you for allowing him to

be with us as many years as he was.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On his way to this place, the Ottawa Citizen headline remarked, "Mitchell Wins Carleton with Awesome Ease." That's because in his first election as an MPP, after serving nine years as deputy mayor, deputy reeve and councillor for the city of Nepean, and six of those years at the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, he came to this place in a landslide to serve in Bill Davis's caucus and later Frank Miller's cabinet. Before politics, he served for 10 years in Canada's military and, perhaps most importantly to many of us in Nepean, he was Nepean's Citizen of the Year.

So I consider it a great privilege to rise on behalf of Tim Hudak and the entire Progressive Conservative caucus out of respect for one of our own, our former PC MPP Bob Mitchell. I'll be sharing my time with the member for Carleton-Mississippi Mills, who was able to serve with Bob Mitchell in both Frank Miller's and Bill Davis's administrations. I'd also like to acknowledge my colleague from Wellington-Halton Hills, who became great friends later on in his life with Bob Mitchell and has fond memories of him as well.

I'm pleased that my friends from Nepean-Carleton are able to join us today, and those are Mr. Mitchell's family: Leta Mitchell, Jeff Mitchell, Melanie Reid, Jane Mitchell-Haynes, and Ken Ross, a friend of the family and a friend of mine.

I only ever had one occasion to speak with Bob Mitchell. It was just before his death in 2007. I called him while he was in hospital. Though I never really knew Bob Mitchell—and I certainly have gotten to know Jeff and the rest of the family far better—our lives, I've learned after his death, crossed many times.

I grew up in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. My father had a very good friend named Jim Mitchell. He was and still is a fantastic community man who has given so much to so many different organizations. It was during my dad's own battle with cancer, which was months after Bob passed away, that I would see Jim ever-present at our house, my mother's house or at the hospital. They told me that Bob Mitchell was his brother. I learned that Bob, like Jim, was a community advocate first and foremost. I think that signified his career in all of public service, whether it was as a community association president, a city councillor, an MPP or just a person who wanted to contribute to the good of Nepean—Carleton or the old region of Carleton county.

1540

Bob was instrumental in Canada's Centennial celebration in Nepean. He had a major hand in almost every single one of our cherished institutions. To name a few: Algonquin College, Queensway Carleton Hospital, the Nepean Sportsplex and, of course, the John McCrae Secondary School, which was the first high school in Barrhaven.

Bob was one of a visionary group of Conservative politicians of the day who developed what was then a quiet bedroom community in the old city of Ottawa into what is now a major suburban centre in the province of

Ontario, right within our nation's capital.

In the first provincial campaign that he undertook, he talked about the lack of skilled workers in high tech, the need for more long-term-care beds and the importance of infrastructure in what is now the city's southwest end. Today, 30 years later, in this Legislature we are still talking about the issues that Bob Mitchell raised in that first by-election campaign.

His ministerial portfolio focused on science and technology, and his son-in-law John Sparks told the Ottawa Sun after his passing, "It's no coincidence that

Nepean became a Canadian high-tech centre."

But for all the big projects and the big ideas that Bob Mitchell had, I think he will be best remembered as a constituency man. In his own words, he told the Ottawa Citizen when he left this place, "I think I'll miss helping people, the day-to-day contact with people off the street. I've never lived on the banquet circuit; I've always preferred constituency work." And so he did, and so he will be remembered.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I knew Bob very well. Bob was elected in a by-election on November 20, 1980. Sid Handleman, who was the previous member for Carleton—that was the name of the riding at that time—had resigned because of ill health and Bob stepped in.

I can remember the party looking for a star candidate in this by-election. As parties often do, they tried to get a star candidate in a by-election. I saw the list and I talked with the party, and Bob Mitchell's name was there. I kept saying to the party, "Why are you searching any longer for a candidate when you can get Bob Mitchell on the ballot?" Bob was so well known in the area, he had done so much good work in the area, I assumed, and I guess predicted, that he would do very well.

The by-election was called, and he was nominated as a candidate and was on the campaign trail. At that time I was a parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General and I told the Attorney General, "I'm going to Ottawa and I'm going to spend the month with Bob Mitchell." So I spent every day on the bus with Bob Mitchell and got to

know him very well.

The big problem with campaigning with Bob Mitchell was that everybody wanted to talk with him, and they wanted to talk and they wanted to talk. And Bob was no better; he wanted to talk as well. When you're in a campaign, you've got so much time. You want to talk to the particular voter and say, "Will you support me?" and then you want to move on to the next one and talk a little bit there. That was very difficult with Bob Mitchell, because he knew everybody and he was so involved in his community that there were more topics of conversation that he could get into than you could dream of.

So Bob was elected on November 20, 1980. The provincial election was on February—

Hon. James J. Bradley: March 19.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: March 19, 1981. Although Bob won the by-election, I don't think he ever occupied his seat in this place prior to being re-elected the next time around. He had an election in November and another election three months later. So poor Bob—well, it wasn't poor Bob, in a way, because the Conservatives were coming back at that time. He won by an even larger margin the second time, after the by-election.

Bob served here with a great deal of dignity. He was loyal to the party. He was so loyal to his people. Bob had a bit of a quick temper from time to time. If he thought his constituent or his community was being taken advantage of, he would let you and everybody else know about it. I think it was part of that which enabled him to represent his area so well and for him to do so well for his area.

As other speakers have mentioned, perhaps the greatest asset was his ability to talk with his community and be so knowledgeable about his community, because he had been so involved with that community for a long, long period of time.

It's also been mentioned that he worked with Aubrey Moodie, who was the former reeve of the township of Nepean, to establish and get the Queensway Carleton Hospital up and going. They were the two key factors in

driving that hospital initiative.

Bob's wife, Lee, is with us, and many members of his family. Their family did sacrifice a lot in Bob coming here, because they gave up Bob when he was down here. They missed him, and it was hard on the family, I know, at the time, in talking with them about it. So they have sacrificed a lot in giving Bob to us.

After he left here, I think it's also important to note that he did a lot of work for the engineering technologists. He acted as an advocate for them. He wasn't a lobbyist as such in working on a lot of different things, but he did work with the engineering technologists, and I think he led and helped them get significant and deserved recognition by the Ontario Legislature. He had a great connection with former members. He was able to talk to people who were in power and out of power, and he really convinced everybody that the engineering technologists should be recognized here in the province of Ontario, and their recognition—I think they can thank Bob Mitchell for that.

Lastly, I just want to say that this was a man who gave his heart to his job, gave his heart to his party and gave his heart to the Legislature, and his family can be very, very proud of his contribution to our province. Thank you very much for allowing him to share his life with us.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): To the family, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, thank you for coming and visiting us at Queen's Park today and that the opportunity was given for all three parties to offer tribute. I will ensure that copies of today's Hansard and a DVD of the proceedings are sent to you as a memento. Thank you very much, and a safe journey home.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

POVERTY PAUVRETÉ

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I am pleased to rise today to recognize a very important anniversary for this province.

Demain, le 6 mai, nous fêterons le premier anniversaire de l'adoption de la Loi de 2009 sur la réduction de la pauvreté en Ontario, qui avait été votée à l'unanimité par tous les partis représentés au sein de cette Assemblée législative.

On May 6, 2009, one year ago tomorrow, Ontario's historic Poverty Reduction Act was passed unanimously by all parties in this Legislature. This act marked a major step forward in our fight against poverty. It enshrined in law that poverty reduction will be a priority not only for our government but for all successive Ontario governments, because poverty reduction is the right thing to do as a moral imperative and it is the right thing to do for our economy.

In 2007, Premier McGuinty made a commitment to introduce poverty reduction targets and a plan to achieve them. He had a vision—a vision of a province where every person, man or woman, child or adult, had the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential, a vision for an Ontario where single mothers have the supports to go to work and not have to worry about what their child will eat for lunch.

The Premier established a cabinet committee on poverty reduction, and I am pleased to lead this important work today.

Nous avons consulté différents groupes communautaires dans l'ensemble de la province, des défenseurs des intérêts, des universitaires et, surtout, des personnes qui vivent dans la pauvreté.

1550

We consulted with community groups from across the province, advocates, academics and, most importantly, people living in poverty. We listened, we learned. Their feedback contributed to the poverty reduction strategy that we launched in December 2008 called Breaking the Cycle—because only by breaking the cycle of poverty can we prevent the next generations from falling into it over and over again.

We decided to focus first on children and youth, supporting them, especially the most vulnerable, in getting the education and opportunities they deserve in order to leave poverty behind for good.

We set a clear, achievable and measurable target to reduce the number of children living in poverty by 25% over five years. That is 90,000 kids.

Au cours de la première année de mise en œuvre de la stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté, notre gouvernement a pris des mesures clés pour aider les familles à faible revenu à bâtir de meilleures perspectives d'avenir pour elles-mêmes et pour leurs enfants.

In the first year of the poverty reduction strategy, our government has taken some other key steps to help low-income families build brighter futures for themselves and their children. Poverty has traditionally only been measured by income. However, we established eight poverty indicators—they are the Ontario deprivation index; birth weight; school readiness; high school graduation rates; educational progress; depth of poverty; the Ontario housing measure; and Statistics Canada's low-income measure—and we are taking important steps to improve the lives of Ontarians.

We have accelerated the increase to the Ontario child benefit to provide low-income families with up to \$1,100 per child annually a full two years ahead of schedule. This, along with other increases, means a single mother of two young kids on social assistance has an income today that is 42% higher than when we took office in 2003.

We have moved ahead with full-day learning for fourand five-year-olds, starting with enrolment of up to 35,000 kids this coming September.

We also believe that a critical part of poverty reduction is to ensure that low-income working parents continue to have access to affordable, high-quality child care so they can go back to school or work. To ensure this, our recent budget invested \$63.5 million per year for child care to permanently fill the funding gap left by the federal government. This investment will save about 8,500 child care spaces across the province.

C'est pourquoi nous avons également revu à la hausse les aides octroyées dans le cadre du programme Ontario au travail et du program ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées.

Par ailleurs, nous avons modifié le règlement sur l'aide sociale afin de réduire les obstacles et d'élargir l'accès.

Another key part of the poverty reduction strategy is an upcoming new affordable housing strategy. We have introduced a comprehensive package of tax reforms that means Ontarians with modest incomes will pay the lowest provincial income tax rate in Canada and 90,000 low-income Ontarians will no longer have to pay any personal income tax.

As well, just last month, our government increased the minimum wage to \$10.25 per hour, and that means a person working full-time will make an extra \$120 per month.

La poursuite de notre travail commun, en collaboration avec tous nos partenaires, nous permettra de faire une réelle différence grâce à la réduction de la pauvreté, à l'amélioration du niveau de vie et à la construction d'un Ontario prospère pour tous.

We are proud of what we have accomplished in the first year of our poverty reduction strategy, but we have so much more to do. I know that by continuing to work together with all of our partners, we will continue to make a real difference by reducing poverty, improving lives and contributing to a prosperous Ontario for everyone.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Today, I rise in the House to mark the 15th annual Emergency Preparedness Week, which runs from May 2 to 8 across Canada.

Emergency Preparedness Week is a joint initiative supported by the federal government, the provinces, territories, and our municipal and private sector partners. Its purpose is to raise public awareness about the importance of being prepared for an emergency.

This year, Emergency Management Ontario is running a province-wide online challenge to increase citizens' awareness and knowledge of emergency preparedness. The challenge consists of a series of quizzes, each one aimed at a different age group from child to adult, so that everyone can take the challenge and learn more about preparing themselves and their families. The challenge can be found at ontario.ca/beprepared.

We know all too well that emergencies can happen at any time and often strike without warning. The blackout of 2003 and, more recently, last summer's tornadoes and January's devastating earthquake in Haiti are examples that come to mind.

When an emergency happens, being prepared is critical. Emergency response resources may be stretched thin, so every Ontario household should be prepared to look after themselves for the first 72 hours of any crisis. That means having a family emergency plan and survival kit on hand and ready to go. Unfortunately, less than 40% of Ontarians have some sort of emergency survival kit, and a 2007 Public Safety Canada survey found that just 12% of Canadians had a kit that met government standards.

By taking time now to prepare emergency supplies, Ontarians can help keep their families safe and free up emergency responders to focus on those in greatest need in a time of crisis. Family emergency planning should include the needs of every member of the household, including infants and people with disabilities or special needs.

And we can't forget our pets. I'm sure we all remember the thousands of animals abandoned in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. It's important to remember that pets are dependent on their families to make sure that they are safe and cared for, as well.

Tips on preparing a family emergency plan and how to assemble kits, including kits for pets, are available on the Emergency Management Ontario website.

While encouraging Ontario families to prepare themselves for emergencies, it's important to remind our citizens that government takes the message of preparedness very seriously. We continue to work diligently with our federal, municipal and private sector partners to ensure that Ontario is well prepared to meet the challenges of any emergency we might face.

In closing, today I ask all members of this House to promote greater awareness in their ridings of the need to be prepared.

And don't forget to take the challenge.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

POVERTY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus to respond to the minister on the one-year anniversary of the poverty reduction strategy.

It is rich for this minister to rise and crow about poverty reduction when so many families are being left behind because of Liberal inaction.

Let's start with children who have been diagnosed with autism. There are over 1,500 children who are on wait-lists for provincially funded IBI therapy and almost 400 children who are waiting for assessments. While children sit on wait-lists for funding, some families are forced to pay \$60,000 per year out of their own pockets for IBI therapy. Families are selling their homes, cashing in their savings and mortgaging their future to ensure that their children have access to treatment. That is Liberalimposed poverty.

Alison Ashworth of Cambridge said in a letter to me, "I was appalled when I returned to Canada from living in the United States and experienced first-hand how drastically underfunded children with disabilities are, and even more so to see how bad it is in the autism community."

Alison has three children with autism. She was denied special services at home, and faces a two-year wait-list to receive therapy for her children. Is this fair treatment for Alison and her three children?

What about the families with medically fragile and technology-dependent children? The MacGregor family from Kitchener spends \$3,000 per month on medications, supplies, breathing apparatus, orthotics, renovations, an accessible van, diapers, attendant and nursing care. Yet they receive \$4,500 per year from special services at home. This \$4,500 will barely support their son Matthew for a month and a half. The MacGregors have had to hire a nanny out of their own pocket so that Laura can spend some time with her other two children. Is this fair for Matthew and the MacGregor family? This is Liberalimposed poverty.

1600

Why would the minister stand here and celebrate poverty reduction when there are over 30,000 new cases and 50,000 more beneficiaries receiving Ontario Works payments than there were one year ago today? Must be Liberal math. We have almost 23,000 more beneficiaries receiving ODSP payments than there were one year ago—some anniversary.

We need a real strategy to create jobs and opportunity in Ontario, giving families real help, not talk, as my colleague the member for Haldimand–Norfolk has done with his private member's bill to allow individuals on ODSP to keep the money they earn. It is steps and initiatives like this where we will see a real change in reducing poverty here in Ontario. If the government would pass Mr. Barrett's private member's bill, that would be worth celebrating and we would see some real action in tackling poverty in Ontario.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to respond to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services on behalf of our caucus.

I had an opportunity today to join the federal Minister of Public Safety, Mr. Toews, at a couple of events here in the city of Toronto. It was really nice that at one of the events he promoted National Emergency Preparedness Week and announced \$8 million in joint emergency preparedness planning to the municipalities—over 400 projects across the different provinces across the country.

I want to thank a number of the people who were present at that, particularly Chief Stewart of the fire service, the Toronto Police Service, St. John Ambulance, the Ontario Provincial Police and representatives of the Toronto urban search and rescue unit, all of which

participate in urban tragedies.

I think a lot of the preparedness goes back to the Mississauga train derailment that occurred a number of years ago. I understand that a lot of people have not learned their lesson from that and certainly aren't prepared. As we say, there is a challenge out there, the 72-hour preparedness, and I agree with that. I think more people should be aware of that. I look forword to helping my constituents and to helping our emergency service people prepare better each and every year. I think this is a giant step, having the week recognized each year.

I thank the minister for his comments and look forward to the comments from my colleague from Welland.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

Mr. Peter Kormos: Nothing but piddling pap from both these ministers this afternoon. I'll restrict my response to the Minister of Community Safety. Mr. Prue will be taking care of the other in short order.

If I were permitted, I would quote Senator Nancy Ruth as my complete response to the Minister for Community Safety. It would be concise, it would be brief, it would be

to the point and it would be less than subtle.

Quizzes, board games? Give me a break. If this government was interested in emergency preparedness, it wouldn't be shutting down hospital emergency rooms in Fort Erie and Port Colborne. If this government was interested in emergency preparedness, they wouldn't be laying off nurses. If this government was interested in emergency preparedness, it wouldn't be shutting down core hospital services in hospital after hospital after hospital. If this government was interested in emergency preparedness, it would ensure that there was access to medical doctors and medical treatment centres for every Ontarian throughout this province.

Emergency preparedness is about ensuring we have firefighters, police officers and other first responders adequately resourced, and this government has abandoned those communities that are forced to pay the full tab for firefighters and—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan will withdraw the comment that he just made.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Welland.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you kindly. It's a shame, Speaker, that you should have to admonish the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, but I suppose his name is in Hansard, after all.

If this government were serious about emergency preparedness, it would ensure that cash-strapped communities across this province have the resources they need to fully staff firefighting and policing services. It hasn't done that; it offers up quizzes and websites. I say, this is not a joke today because it's far too serious. It's very, very sad, and once again I quote Senator Nancy Ruth.

POVERTY

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened in complete awe to the minister as she stood up and waxed eloquent about all the things that her government is doing around poverty, but the reality is, 25 in 5 isn't reducing poverty one iota in this province. The centre for policy justice recently released a report showing that poverty is on the increase in Ontario. Social assistance rates are up 23% in 2009. How is that fighting poverty?

You have cut the special diet allowance, leaving tens of thousands of sick Ontarians wondering where they're going to get food. The Human Rights Commission found the government in contempt for what you were doing, and instead of doing the right thing by those poor people, you went to court and you changed the law so that you don't have to give them the food they need. Social assistance recipients in Ontario are worse off today than they were in the deepest, darkest days of Mike Harris. You don't have to listen to me. I've said this many times; Linda McQuaig said the same thing even more eloquently in the Toronto Star this week. You talk about giving them 11% over the last six years. Well, the inflation rate has been 15% over those same six years. They're 4% worse off today. How is that helping poverty?

Your own Social Assistance Review Board, which is supposed to advise this government, hasn't reported, and when they write letters to you saying and begging for you to do the right thing, you ignore them. How is that

fighting poverty?

It gets worse every day. This government, in its most recent budget, announced with great fanfare that they're increasing social assistance rates. They did—1%—but it's not now. It's in November, if you're on ODSP, and if you're misfortunate enough to be on Ontario Works, it's not until December. So you get 1% for one twelfth of the year. What kind of an increase is that? How can the minister stand up and say that that's helping? You're not ending the clawback. You're clawing back from people—people who are on ODSP, people who were

born with Down's syndrome. You keep taking half their money back when they find a job. How is that helping? You took away the winter clothing allowance. How is that helping? In the end, this government believes in 25 in 5, all right; that is, that people who are poor are going to be 25% worse off five years from now. That's your legacy.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is downloading hundreds of millions in health care costs to Ontario pharmacists and consumers; and

"Whereas pharmacists are valued health professionals in private practice and cannot sustain present service levels under these conditions; and

"Whereas many smaller pharmacies will close and larger ones will have to drastically cut valued services; and

"Whereas this attack on pharmacies is just one example of the McGuinty government's program of cutting health care in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

As I agree with this petition, I sign on the face of it.

TAXATION

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a duplicated tax system puts our businesses at a disadvantage by increasing the costs of doing business; and

"Whereas a single, unified tax system reduces the burden on businesses by removing the provincial sales tax on goods and reducing administrative costs; and

"Whereas both Conservative and Liberal members of the provincial and federal Legislatures have voiced their support of a single sales tax; and

"Whereas local chambers of commerce, economists and experts are also supporting the move to a single tax system; and

"Whereas the recent RBC Economics report found that the HST is improving the competitiveness of Ontario businesses by lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario; and

"Whereas a harmonized sales tax is expected to create jobs for Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government of Ontario's plan to implement the HST and other tax reforms to benefit Ontario businesses and consumers"

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and send it to the table via page Emma.

1610

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. John O'Toole: I wish to present a petition on behalf of the constituents of the riding of Durham. It reads as follows.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government-appointed local health integration network (LHIN) has approved a budget proposal by the Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) that includes plans to close 26 hospital beds, outpatient rehabilitation and the diabetes education clinic; and

"Whereas these cuts will leave no outpatient rehabilitation (including physio- and occupational therapy) available for patients in Northumberland county; and

"Whereas this cut leaves all patients with insulindependent diabetes without education and support that is vital to prevent serious health decline; and

"Whereas these cuts will result in for-profit privatization of hospital beds and services and new user fees for patients; and

"Whereas private, for-profit, unaccredited retirement homes are not safe or appropriate to house patients who need professional nursing and health care; and

"Whereas the NHH is considered a very efficient hospital in comparison with peer hospitals and the people of west Northumberland have already made a huge sacrifice regarding hospital services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government act immediately to protect patients in Northumberland Hills, fund the hospital to maintain the current services, and stop the hospital bed and service cuts."

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents and the constituents of Lou Rinaldi.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from l'école Gisèle-Lalonde and Claudine Soucie, Annie-Claude Dubé and Genevieve Peever, who have signed it with many others.

"Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its 2007 report, concluded that without dramatic reductions in human-induced carbon dioxide emissions, climate change may bring 'abrupt and irreversible effects on oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species;' and

"Whereas no one group, country or continent is responsible for climate change, but where all human beings are collectively responsible for solving the problem; and "Whereas the production of greenhouse gases in Canada has increased by 27% over 1990 levels; and

"Whereas our elected leaders have a responsibility to report to the public on their actions with respect to halting climate change for the sake of accountability; and

"Whereas youth in particular have a special interest in this issue, being those that will inherit this earth, our only home.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208," now Bill 6, "An Act to increase awareness of climate change."

I agree with this petition, will sign it and send it up with page Stig.

TAXATION

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again on Canada Day 2010 with his new 13% combined GST, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's new 13% combined GST will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as: coffee, newspapers and magazines, courier fees, gas at the pumps, home heating oil and electricity, postage stamps, haircuts, dry cleaning, home renovations, veterinary care, arena ice and soccer field rentals, Internet fees, massage therapy, funerals, condo fees, fast food" over "\$4, bus fares, golf green fees, gym fees, snowplowing, bicycles, taxi fares, train fares"—excuse me, I'm getting out of breath—"accountant and legal services, real estate commissions and theatre admissions:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government recognize Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

Pursuant to the standing orders, I affix my name thereto.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Peter Kormos: I have a petition, certified by the Clerk, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Education's accommodation review process, used by school boards to accommodate students, and which includes closing schools, is flawed, lacks transparency and accountability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately stop the closure of Crowland Central Public School and any disputed closures. Develop policies where school boards are more accountable and the ministry, school boards, municipalities and community members work together openly and transparently to deal with funding, schools and declining enrolment."

I have signed it as well.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Mr. Joe Dickson: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas early childhood learning is a fundamental program in the development and education of Ontario's youth;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to expand full-day learning across the province;

"To continue to make our children a priority for this government:

"To continue investments in the infrastructure of our education system;

"To continue to support Ontario's families through these initiatives; and

"To never go back to the days of forgotten children and mismanagement of schools we saw in the 1990s. We applaud the new investments in full-day learning and look forward to their continued growth across the province."

I agree with the petition, I will attach my signature to it, and I will pass it to Nirosha.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition. I think it's an appropriate one, and it was accepted yesterday. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy now."

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents and the seniors who are so dependent on our pharmacists for their support.

TAXATION

Mr. Rick Johnson: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a duplicated tax system puts our businesses at a disadvantage by increasing the costs of doing business; and

"Whereas a single, unified tax system reduces the burden on businesses by removing the provincial sales tax on goods and reducing administrative costs; and

"Whereas both Conservative and Liberal members of the provincial and federal Legislatures have voiced their support of a single sales tax; and

"Whereas local chambers of commerce, economists and experts are also supporting the move to a single tax system; and

"Whereas the recent RBC Economics report found that the HST is improving the competitiveness of Ontario businesses by lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario: and

"Whereas a harmonized sales tax is expected to create iobs for Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government of Ontario's plan to implement the HST and other tax reforms to benefit Ontario businesses and consumers."

I agree with this petition and I present it to Rhett.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is downloading hundreds of millions in health care costs to Ontario pharmacists and consumers; and

"Whereas pharmacists are valued health professionals in private practice and cannot sustain present service levels under these conditions; and

"Whereas many smaller pharmacies will close and larger ones will have to drastically cut valued services; and

"Whereas this attack on pharmacies is just one example of the McGuinty government's program of cutting health care in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Bill Mauro: I've got a petition that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas we currently have no psychiatric emergency service at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to support the creation of a psychiatric emergency service in emergency at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario."

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature to it and present it to Joshua.

TAXATION

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham, which reads as follows—I think you've heard this one before:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

"Whereas, by 2010, Dalton McGuinty's new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day. A few examples" are—I won't go through the whole list: "coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming; home renovations and home services"—financial investments—"veterinary care and pet care;" home care; "legal services, the sale of resale homes, and funeral arrangements:

1620

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election," if you recall. "However, in 2004, he brought in the health tax, which now costs upwards of \$900 per individual. And now he is raising our taxes again"—surprise:

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legis-

lative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents and present it to one of the pages here at Oueen's Park.

CHANGEMENT DE CLIMAT

M. Phil McNeely: J'ai une pétition de l'école Gisèle-Lalonde que Nathalie Bourgeois, Samantha Parent et Éva-Pièr Villeneuve ont signée.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que dans son rapport de 2007, le Groupe d'experts intergouvernemental sur l'évolution du climat des Nations Unies a conclu que, sans des réductions dramatiques au niveau des émissions de dioxyde de carbone imputables à des activités humaines, les changements climatiques pourraient avoir des "effets soudains et irréversibles sur les océans, les glaciers, les terres, les littoraux et les espèces"; et

« Attendu qu'aucun groupe, pays ou continent n'assume la responsabilité des changements climatiques mais que tous les êtres humains sont collectivement responsables d'y apporter une solution; et

« Attendu que la production de gaz à effet de serre a augmenté de 27 % au-dessus des niveaux de 1990 au Canada; et

« Attendu que nos chefs élus ont la responsabilité de rendre compte aux membres du public de leurs gestes pour enrayer la problématique des changements climatiques par égard pour la redevabilité; et

« Attendu que les jeunes en particulier, héritiers éventuels de cette Terre, notre seul demeure, démontrent un intérêt spécial pour cette question;

législative de l'Ontario adopte rapidement le projet de loi

« Nous, les soussignés, adressons une pétition à l'Assemblée législative pour demander que l'Assemblée 208, »—là, c'est le projet de loi 6—« la Loi sur la sensibilisation aux changements climatiques. »

Je suis d'accord avec la pétition et je la signe.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I have a petition on behalf of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care in the Nepean-Carleton community that I'd like to read into the record.

"Whereas, in the 2006 budget, the McGuinty government allocated \$63.5 million for child care for each of the next four years. Each year since, \$63.5 million went to support our vital child care services;

"Whereas, if the province does not continue this funding in the 2010 provincial budget, municipalities will have no option but to make dramatic cuts to child care subsidies, destabilizing the entire system;

"Therefore, be it resolved that in the 2010 budget we call on" the Premier "and Finance Minister ... to:

"(1) Ensure the province provides sufficient funding to maintain existing levels of child care service, and recognize cost-of-living and other legitimate increases in operating costs; and

"(2) Provide all necessary tools to support the transition to an early learning program, including base funding for child care programs to support operations and wages comparable to the full-day learning program, in order to ensure the child care system remains stable and sustainable."

I will affix my signature. I would like to thank my constituents in Nepean-Carleton for bringing this to my attention, as well as page Caroline for taking this petition to the table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent regarding An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that the order for second reading of Bill 50, An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, shall be called immediately, and up to 20 minutes shall be allotted to each recognized party for second reading debate, following which the Speaker shall put the question on the motion for second reading of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

Upon passage of the second reading stage of the bill, the order for third reading shall be called immediately and the Speaker shall put the question without further debate or amendment; and

In the case of any division, the bells be limited to five minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Does everyone understand the motion? Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS' INTEGRITY AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'INTÉGRITÉ DES DÉPUTÉS

Ms. Smith moved second reading of the following bill: Bill 50, An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur l'intégrité des députés.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Ms. Smith has moved second reading of Bill 50. Ms. Smith.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: It's my pleasure today to speak to the House as we introduce the proposed amendments to the Members' Integrity Act. I'd like to acknowledge, in the Speaker's gallery, as she was earlier acknowledged, our Integrity Commissioner, Lynn Morrison, and counsel to the Integrity Commissioner, Val Jepson, who are both here today

Hon. James J. Bradley: Good people, both of them. Hon. Monique M. Smith: Absolutely. And I'll have more to say about both of them in a moment.

This act is an important one for every member of the House and for the people of our province. The Members' Integrity Act, 1994, which was formerly the Conflict of Interest Act, 1988, was created to serve as a guide for members of the Ontario Legislature in their day-to-day activities to prevent ethics violations before they occur.

The road to this bill has been a long and circuitous one, and I'd just like to go over a little bit of the history, as I'm sure the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills will enjoy.

In 2005-06, I believe, an all-party committee was struck to review the existing integrity act. This was at the behest, really, of the then Integrity Commissioner, Mr. Justice Coulter Osborne, who was to be here with us today. We're sorry that he's not, but I know that he will be delighted to see the promise finally kept. He requested the members of all parties of Legislature that we join together and review the integrity act in order to bring it up to date, to today's standards, to activities of members today. He pushed very hard during his tenure as the Integrity Commissioner to see this move forward, and in fact an all-party committee did meet on a number of occasions. We devoted, I would say, countless hours, the member for Carleton-Mississippi Mills, myself and, for a short time, the member for Hamilton Centre, as we reviewed the various sections of the act and made recommendations on how it could be improved for all members and for the province.

At his retirement celebration, I remember that Mr. Justice Osborne raised with me the issue of the act and the fact that the promise had not yet been kept, but I told him then and I stand here today now as proof that it is

finally happening, so we are delighted to make it finally happen. His successor, Lynn Morrison, in her capacity as Acting Integrity Commissioner was equally vigilant in pursuing the changes to the act that are required to help her do her duties, which she does so well, as well as to help all of the members of this Legislature in their work and their duties. Both of these servants of the public and officers of the Legislature have served us incredibly well in their input, in the changes that we put before this House today. And certainly the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, and in the most recent iterations in a few years, the member for Welland, have participated with me in a number of discussions and working groups to ensure that the changes that we propose today serve the needs of all members of the Legislature.

With these proposed amendments, our goal is to strengthen and modernize the existing legislation. We want to build a stronger foundation for our accountability and transparency. Our proposed amendments would clarify our obligations and requirements as members of the Legislative Assembly and for members of cabinet. It would address gaps in the existing legislation and bring the legislation in line with current practices. I'm very proud of the work that all three parties have done to draft these proposed amendments.

The changes we are proposing today would, if passed, strengthen our integrity legislation in a number of ways. The amendments would extend the reach of the act to include members of the Legislative Assembly in the period leading up to an election, members of cabinet who are not part of the Legislative Assembly, and leaders of recognized political parties who are not members of the Legislative Assembly.

If passed, the act would also strengthen the Integrity Commissioner's authority. It would authorize the commissioner to advise former members of cabinet on their obligations under the act, and when a former member has contravened the act it would allow the commissioner to recommend a reprimand.

The proposed amendments would also provide greater clarity to help members reconcile private interests with public duties, and the act would, for example, clarify the post-employment obligations of former cabinet ministers and would clarify requirements around the receipt and disclosure of gifts.

Ontario needs this legislation. There have been no substantial amendments to the act since it took effect nearly 15 years ago.

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I think the co-operation that has brought these amendments together today speaks to their importance. I can't emphasize enough the co-operation that we've seen from all three parties as we have worked together in both the review of the existing legislation and in the drafting process, as we have all been involved in looking at the changes that have been worked through, together with our Integrity Commissioner and her ever-vigilant counsel, Val Jepson, who has worked very hard on making this happen.

I want to thank the Integrity Commissioner, Lynn Morrison, Val Jepson, her counsel, as well as, of course, Mr. Justice Coulter Osborne, for all of their work on this.

Hon. James J. Bradley: All good people.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Exactly—very good people.

I also want to thank the staff at the Attorney General's office who have also been involved in the drafting of this legislation, the Attorney General and his deputy.

As well, I'd like to thank—and they're not often thanked, as the member for Welland will attest—the legislative drafters, who have worked very hard in what was for them a different circumstance as they worked with all three parties to ensure that the interests of all members of this Legislature were represented.

I think our collective commitment demonstrates that we are all committed to ethical leadership here in the province. As members of this House, we all have a duty to maintain a strong code of conduct. The proposed amendments would help us do just that.

The Members' Integrity Amendment Act, 2010, would, if passed, help ensure that our requirements are clear and effective, and reflect current practice. It will help the members of this House to bring a more transparent approach to government, and above all it will enhance public confidence in this assembly. I ask everyone in the House to continue their support for this legislation.

I appreciate all the good work that has been done by the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, the member for Welland and all those in the staff who have helped us to get to this day. It's been a long time coming, but we're certainly glad this day is finally here.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I appreciate the comments of the government House leader. This has been a cooperative piece of legislation, which is a rarity in this Legislature.

Along with her and other members of the Legislature, I met with the Honourable Justice Coulter Osborne some time ago to talk about the problems of putting the old act into place and trying to be fair in dealing with a number of nuances which were discovered after the implementation of the 1994 act. One of them, which was alluded to by the government House leader, was that a lot of people don't understand that when Parliament is dissolved, there are no MPPs after that date. The problem with the 1994 act is that it didn't take into consideration the time between the dissolution of Parliament here in Ontario and the actual election of the new MPPs, so it didn't give jurisdiction during that period of time to the Integrity Commissioner to do his or her work, as was really intended by the 1994 act.

As well, the former Integrity Commissioner and the present Integrity Commissioner were asked by prospective candidates as to how becoming an MPP would affect their life should they become an MPP. The former act did not give jurisdiction to the Integrity Com-

missioner to do that. However, he did do that and gave advice to people who were considering running and wanted to know how it would affect their business, their family etc. I think that was the right thing to do, but it's time that we wrote those things down and into the act.

The integrity act was created in 1994 for clarity so that people who came to Queen's Park as MPPs would understand what their obligations were with regard to their personal affairs when they became members of this Legislature. As well, the act clarifies what the responsibilities and the limitations are on us, either as MPPs or as cabinet ministers.

Therefore, the act actually helps MPPs. Even though we are required to report to the Integrity Commissioner, in effect it acts as a protection for us because we know then what is required of us. We make public to the Integrity Commissioner our personal financial positions, and she is able to then report to the public that we live within the confines of the legislation.

As I said before, this was done in a co-operative way. I only wish that other legislation could be done this same way. I believe it could if a government turned their mind to it.

I want to thank the government House leader for making an amendment to the legislation, because some of the members of my caucus wanted a particular section amended, and that was done in the present act.

I want to indicate that I and my caucus will be supporting this piece of legislation on second and third reading.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Kormos: New Democrats, of course, are supporting this bill and these amendments to the Members' Integrity Act. I do acknowledge the work that was put into it by any number of members of the Legislature over the course of this ad hoc committee that was structured by Coulter Osborne, the predecessor to our current Integrity Commissioner. I'll be commenting on some of those sections.

It's a rare occasion, and it should be a rare occasion—and even now I have second thoughts about the manner in which we're proceeding with second and third reading without any committee, and I'll explain why. However, in this instance, I tell you that as with other caucuses, every member of the NDP caucus has seen the roughest draft and has had an opportunity to express any concerns about it. There were no concerns expressed. The NDP caucus has seen successive drafts and similarly has been permitted to comment on those. The NDP caucus has seen the most final draft before the bill was actually prepared—in other words, a rough copy of the bill—and none of my colleagues had any concerns about the sections that were included in that rough draft of the bill itself.

We are proceeding with second and third reading. The reason why I am somewhat troubled by it is that it leaves a paucity of record. The Members' Integrity Act, like many other bits of legislation, doesn't get addressed very

often; perhaps not often enough in terms of modernizing them, in terms of addressing shortcomings, in terms of fine-tuning. The absence of a committee process and a clause-by-clause process means that there's no record that people can look to 10 or 15 years from now. The only person who will be left in this House who's here now will be Norm Sterling or perhaps Jim Bradley. That means that people will be struggling with something of a blank page, because they won't have heard as thorough a rationale for the various amendments as they should have been able to.

Having said that, I've acquiesced out of regard for the need to get this matter resolved, and out of the fact that every member of this Legislature has had an opportunity to review these; has raised objections, if there were objections; and if there were objections, has had those objections addressed; and because of the fact that, at the end of the day, it's a relatively modest proposal.

In the course of my comments, I have to reflect on the history of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner, originally the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, I came here in 1988, just a few months after our first Integrity Commissioner was appointed. That, of course, was Greg Evans. I remember him with great fondness. I know his son Judge John Evans. I know his other son Kerry Evans. As a matter of fact, Kerry Evans was a crown attorney down in Welland for a number of years, and he and I became friends during the course of doing courtroom battle on a daily basis. Greg Evans was as impeccable a foundation, as complete a foundation, in terms of the cornerstone of a succession of Integrity Commissioners, as one could ever want. He recalls me having appeared in front of him in court when he was sitting as a judge—no, Mr. Bradley, not as an accused; as counsel. So he and I, in fact, go back a good chunk of time, a long ways.

He, of course, was succeeded by Robert Rutherford, a thoroughly affable and delightful person whom I enjoyed encountering on at least that annual basis when we attend upon the Integrity Commissioner. Retired Judge Rutherford was also a retired military man. He took great pains to inquire as to the well-being of the Swayze family. He was a colleague of Colonel Jim Swayze in Welland, who became a lawyer in Welland, who I knew. I know his children. His son Chuck just died. I know the other Swayze children. I recall those conversations with retired Judge Rutherford.

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Coulter Osborne? Well, Coulter Osborne I knew not only as an Integrity Commissioner and a person in whom I had the greatest confidence, but also a person who proved a minor irritant to me in my very first days here at Queen's Park, because Coulter Osborne authored the Inquiry into Motor Vehicle Accident Compensation back in 1987. That in and of itself was fine. The focus of it was no-fault auto insurance and the pros and cons, but Judge Osborne found it irresistible and included a final chapter that was thoroughly gratuitous. It had nothing to do with the project that he was asked to work on, and of course it was a condemnation of public auto insurance.

As I said, that was a minor irritant to me during the course of the auto insurance debates here at Queen's Park in the period of the government between 1987 and 1990. With respect, it perhaps may have been the only time Judge Osborne was wrong, when he trashed public auto insurance. He may have reflected on it since, I suppose. We'll never really know; he'll never be addressing that issue again.

Again, Judge Osborne was always a source of sage advice, because the Integrity Commissioner is most valuable to us and our staff. My staff use the Integrity Commissioner reasonably frequently. The Integrity Commissioner is far more useful to us as a person from whom we seek counsel before we do the deed rather than somebody who has to then address the misconduct of a member. There have been occasions where the Integrity Commissioner has, and it's always been a fascinating experience, but I want to thank the Integrity Commissioner for its role in making itself available to assist us and our staff in our constituency offices and our Oueen's Park offices.

Lynn Morrison: Of course, I was just absolutely delighted about her appointment. She's been there from the get-go. She's been there from the very beginning. Just think, we've got an Integrity Commissioner who brings with her the legacies of Evans, Osborne and Rutherford all in one package. That's a pretty impressive resumé in and of itself, isn't it? I'm just very pleased. I was so pleased that one of Integrity Commissioner Morrison's first roles was to supervise, if you will, our massaging or our drafting of this particular amendment.

A few things that are interesting about the amendments: One is the addition to gifts that are no longer prohibited. I call this the Joe Cordiano amendment because the act is being amended such that gifts from a political party or riding association are not prohibited. That's why I call it the Cordiano amendment—mischievously. So many of those who hear or read this bill have no idea what I'm speaking of. I suggest they Google or at least do a Hansard check. I have no quarrel with that; it reflects the reality.

The travel points section: Of course, before this amendment travel points couldn't be used for personal use. Well, please. I mean, when the kids were here on the weekend smoking marijuana, that's their argument for the legalization of marijuana: You can't enforce the law anyway, so why don't you just legalize it? What in fact this amendment does is it eliminates the prohibition against using travel points for personal use. However, some of my recent observations in newspapers—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Madam House Leader is pointing out that I'm speaking longer than her, and I'm going to apologize in advance. I'm going to apologize in advance. I said I'd do my best, and I am doing my best, and now the House leader is distracting me. She's taking me off point and I've got to meander back to where I'm focused again. Madam House Leader, I need your help. I want your assistance. I need your support, not your interference.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Marijuana.

Mr. Peter Kormos: We're on marijuana, yes, and the marijuana amendment.

Again, you can't enforce it anyways. However, it could well be a taxable benefit, because apparently that's been a ruling in a number of cases where employees acquire travel points and use them personally: They're deemed to be taxable benefits.

There are a couple of areas where the discretion of the Integrity Commissioner has been expanded, and I questioned that when we met with the Integrity Commissioner in terms of the intent, the purpose, the goal, and I'm satisfied that the Integrity Commissioner should have that discretion.

In closing, Madam House Leader for the government—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: She did it again. I thought I was about to close, but the government House leader interjected and I have to back up.

In closing, one of the regrets I do have about the Members' Integrity Act—it's a valuable thing and it has served us all well—is that to so many it is seen as the substitute, especially in ministerial instances, for ministerial accountability. In other words, increasingly there is a perception and an attitude around here that as long as a minister is in compliance with the Members' Integrity Act, she or he has done no wrong. That's true, because she or he has done nothing to violate the Members' Integrity Act. But increasingly, I've seen in 22 years this incredible shift in what constitutes ministerial accountability. The standard for ministers is far, far lower than it was 22 years ago. In my view, there's an over-reliance upon the Members' Integrity Act. I simply mention this because I find it regrettable and I hope that others share the view that ministers should not be allowed to plead the Members' Integrity Act. In other words, ministers should not be allowed to use the Members' Integrity Act as a shield to say, "Well, I've complied with the Members' Integrity Act, therefore I don't have to be accountable to any further or any higher or greater standard." I think that's fundamentally wrong and I don't think it's appropriate.

Here we are. I've completed my comments. I haven't utilized all the time that was made available to me. I regret that. I compromised with the government House leader in agreeing to 20 minutes per caucus. I promised her that the length of my comments would be proportionate to the length of hers. As it is, they are proportionate, but they're around three times the length of hers, so it's a 3-to-1 ratio. I apologize if I've offended the government House leader, but in view of the expedited manner in which we are passing this bill, I hope that the government House leader, for whom I have the greatest regard and some significant affection, will indulge me and accommodate me.

Thank you kindly, Speaker. We're looking forward to this bill getting third reading.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

There being none, Ms. Smith has moved second reading of Bill 50, An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

MEMBERS' INTEGRITY AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'INTÉGRITÉ DES DÉPUTÉS

Ms. Smith moved third reading of the following bill: Bill 50, An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur l'intégrité des députés.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Orders of the day?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Thank you to all the members of the House. I'm very pleased that we passed this today.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'ENSEIGNEMENT POSTSECONDAIRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 29, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 favorisant le choix et l'excellence au niveau postsecondaire, la Loi de 2005 sur les collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel et la Loi de 2002 sur l'École d'art et de design de l'Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

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Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm happy to continue with the leadoff on Bill 43. Last week, I was talking about the Ombudsman and what he had to say. I'll get back to him toward the end of my remarks. I wanted to make reference to some of the remarks made by the minister in his statement around this particular issue. Then, I'm going to get to the substance of the bill as well, in that order.

The minister claimed in his remarks the following: "Ontario's post-secondary education system is recognized for the quality of programs offered by our colleges and universities. We are a leader in quality assurance for

our post-secondary education system. This is a reputation we value highly and aim to protect.

"Part of our government's Open Ontario plan to create new opportunities for jobs and growth includes raising the number of Ontarians with a post-secondary education credential to 70%. We are also opening our doors to the world and will increase international enrolment by 50%."

Of course, he says this with much pride.

We know that an educated and skilled workforce is one of the cornerstones of a prosperous and competitive Ontario. We know that. But we can't accomplish this without strong leadership and a compelling vision for post-secondary education in Ontario. Under the current McGuinty administration, we have neither. Instead, we've seen over the years a patchwork of announcements and inflated rhetoric.

In 2005, the McGuinty government brought in its much-publicized Reaching Higher program, which was supposed to inject badly needed funding into post-secondary education. Unfortunately, for every dollar of student financial assistance made available through Reaching Higher, \$1.30 was clawed back through tuition fee increases.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Ontario now has the highest tuition fees in the country, something that the Minister of Transportation must be truly happy about—21% higher than the average for undergraduates and 44% higher for graduate students. God bless, Jim.

The government's answer is to outline yet another strategy, called Open Ontario. Now the solution to unacceptably high teacher-student ratios, rocketing tuition fees, lack of accessibility and crippling debt loads, not to mention the increasing demand created by older workers retraining alongside recent high school graduates, is simply to attract more international students and their money to Ontario.

Will more international students result in reductions in tuition for Ontario and Canadian students? I doubt it. After we reach a high enough threshold of international students, will the class sizes somehow start to decrease? I doubt it. Will the increased fees and other monies from international students be used to hire more full-time faculty? I don't think so. Will students' debt loads be lessened by the greater presence of international students? I doubt it. Will the international students somehow eliminate the estimated \$1.7 billion required just to address deferred maintenance across Ontario campuses? I doubt it.

The plan to increase the presence of international students in Canada is not an educational plan. It's simply a way to raise a little more cash—no more and no less. In fact, the throne speech was notable for the absence of any substance with regard to post-secondary education.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The fact that the system is still functioning right now—it's good that the rump is listening. It's good to have them here on the left. The fact that the system is still functioning right now has everything to do with the sacrifices students and their

families have made and continue to make, including taking on crippling debt loads that will haunt them for the rest of their lives and decrease their purchasing power for years to come, my friends in the rump.

This is not good policy, to my minister friends I face across the way. This is not an effective way to build up the workforce. We need to compete in the global economy. Investing in quality post-secondary education and training is the most effective way to stimulate the economy and build a resilient future for Ontario. It's not enough to simply let the students and families shoulder the burden indefinitely.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They see you in the camera, by the way, Jim. You've got to watch out. You don't want to be in the camera trying to imitate me. You've got to do this right in your own way. You can't do it sitting down.

It's not enough to simply let the students and their families shoulder the burden indefinitely. We can and must do better.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Hey, Glen, good to see you. He's still to the left of me even though he's in the Liberal Party

The minister's statement in introducing this legislation is simply not supported by the facts. The minister claimed, "In closing, our Open Ontario plan recognizes the importance of post-secondary education to helping our government create more opportunities for jobs and growth to compete in the global market. A higher education will help Ontarians reach their full potential and help us open Ontario to global markets and future prosperity." Sounds good.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Thanks for sticking around for a bit.

"After all," he says, "today's students are the builders, dreamers and innovators who will lead Ontario into the future. They will help us build a stronger Ontario." Sounds good. The problem is, it just sounds good. That's the problem: It just sounds good. There is no substance to it. All of this is true, but the government must do more than recognize the importance of post-secondary education; the government must support it by maintaining the quality and reducing the burden on students and their parents.

Let me talk about tuition fees, Jim, because you've been around. You've been around for a long time. Tuition fees in my time, under the now Liberal member Bob Rae, were 23% of the overall cost. Now, God bless, under the Liberals, it's 45% and rising every year. Those are the facts.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My good friend Jim nods in negation, but those are the facts. Ontario has the highest undergraduate and graduate tuition fees in the country.

Hon. James J. Bradley: That's because we give our money to everybody else to lower theirs.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You are so generous. The Liberal Party is so generous. They give their money away to other provinces so that we can increase tuition fees to our own. That's such a good thing you're doing. I hope you're proud of that, because our students in this province are not very happy with this.

Undergraduate students pay an average of 5,951 bucks, 21% higher than the national average of \$4,900; graduate students, on average, pay \$8,642, 44% higher than the national average of \$6,000; international students pay two to three times more in tuition fees compared to domestic students for the same education. Ontario has the highest international student population in Canada, and they contributed \$2 billion to Ontario's economy in 2008, according to the Conference Board of Canada.

Over the last 15 years, the average undergraduate tuition fees have more than doubled. That is four times faster than the rate of inflation. Ancillary fees that colleges and universities collect to pay for items that are outside of the scope of learning and academics are geared to support student services, to enhance student life. So long as they don't apply to the academic mission of the institutions, ancillary fees have been increasing over the past 10 years, and in many cases they are being charged for items that are outside of the scope of fee protocols and binding regulation. They can range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars.

Student debt: Over the past 15 years the average student debt for a four-year degree has increased by 350%, from 8,000 to over 22,000 bucks. For every new dollar of student financial assistance made available through Reaching Higher, \$1.30 was clawed back through tuition fee increases. There are over 375,000 part-time post-secondary students in Ontario, and not one qualifies for the Ontario student assistance program. Only of late have they tried to speak to this by saying maybe now they can have access to some grants. God bless.

1700

In the greater Toronto area alone, the number of students accessing OSAP increased in the past year by more than 10%. According to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' public accounts statements for 2008-09, the government of Ontario received \$34.85 million in student loan repayments, while the total bad debt expenses for student loans amounted to \$30 million.

Class size and tenured faculty: Ontario's student-to-faculty ratio is currently 27 students per faculty member—the worst in the country and 15% higher than the next highest province. Twenty years ago the ratio was 18 students per faculty member; that was in our time. Now it's 27 to 1. Sessional teaching staff have been hired to fill the faculty gap in universities, a strategy that diminishes the level of quality institutions are able to deliver. The number of necessary new tenure-track faculty hirees needed just to elevate Ontario's level of quality to the national average is around 5,000.

Funding: Ontario has the lowest per-student funding in the country: \$9,718, 78% of the Canadian average at \$12,500 in 2007-08. In 2007-08, Ontario's investment in

post-secondary education represented just 0.7% of the GDP, compared to 0.9% in the late 1980s. It is estimated that there remains a shortfall of approximately \$1.7 billion in funding to address deferred maintenance across Ontario campuses.

Cuts to college and university operating funding have resulted in an increase in reliance on the private sector to make up for the shortfall in funding. Institutions invest in the stock markets to pay for operating expenses, professor salaries, scholarships and financial aid. The University of Toronto reported that it lost \$1.3 billion in 2008, a reduction of 30% in the school's pension and endowment funds. York University lost 19% of its \$300million endowment fund, which makes up a significant portion of the university's income.

Student employment: A poll conducted in the fall of 2009 found that about 50% of full-time students work during the school year. Roughly 60% of university students who worked during the course of their studies report a negative impact on their academic performance. Nationally, the youth unemployment rate in July 2009 was over 20%, compared to roughly 12% in July 2008 and July 2007. This was the highest year on record for youth unemployment. Record-high tuition fees and student debt in Ontario compound the problems for youth in the province.

Aboriginal students: There are currently 11,000 aboriginal students in Ontario studying at post-secondary institutions, and research indicates that thousands of students have not been able to attend school because of lack of money. Only 8% of aboriginal people in Canada have achieved a university degree, compared to 23% of the total Canadian population. Prior to 1999, approximately 27,000 aboriginal students received financial assistance. In 2006, the number fell to just over 22,000. It's estimated that between 2001 and 2006 over 10,500 students were denied funding, with an additional 2,588 denied in 2007-08 alone. First Nations and Inuit students who receive federal funding through the post-secondary student support program to attend college or university rely on money from a program that was capped at 2% growth. However, the average 5% tuition fee increase mandated by the province of Ontario offsets this growth cap and enables fewer students to access the fund.

The point of going through this brief history is to speak to the comments made by the minister in his statement that obviously belie any of the comments that he has made.

I wanted to talk briefly about some of the statements that have been made by the Ombudsman in his July 2009 report, where he says, "A systemic failure"—on the part of the government—"to ensure that the requirements of the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 are adequately enforced in order to protect the public interest in the quality and accountability of vocational training in this province." He said as well, "I am concerned that unless there are some fundamental changes in how the ministry does its business, individuals seeking to better their lives through vocational training will still be at the mercy of ruthless and incompetent illegal operators."

I am assuming that the government has been acting on the recommendations made by the Ombudsman, and I'm assuming that the enforcement provisions of this bill are going to make his job and the government's job easier, because the enforcement provisions of this bill are as follows: The Private Career Colleges Act is amended slightly by Bill 43 where it goes from \$25,000 and \$100,000 penalties in section 48(2) to \$50,000 and \$250,000 respectively. So for individuals it goes from \$25,000 to \$50,000, and for corporations, it goes from \$100,000 to \$250,000. This applies as well to the Postsecondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, which would give similar provisions. So I assume here that if the government goes after colleges or universities that are publicly funded, they would be fined by the government, and presumably they would be paying a fine out of our own money if they are in breach of anything that the government prohibits them from doing.

I wondered about this, because when I looked at the various fines that they have levied in the last year—and I have to admit we checked to be sure that the government is actually doing something in response to the Ombudsman about so many private operators that have been ripping off students without any recourse to get money back or recourse to get access to retraining. For years they've been ripped off, and the Ombudsman made that clear in two of his reports. So I looked to see what they've done in the last year, and I have to admit that there have been about 88-I think it's 88-sanctions against private career colleges since the report by the Ombudsman. Some colleges received more than one, and the penalty escalated and over 30 colleges were fined. So we think the government is finally doing something. I don't mind that. I think it's important for the government to be seen to be doing something where for years they did nothing. In fact, they patted some of those private operators on the back for years as they were not in compliance with the law.

I checked to see what some of those fines were, and some of the fines range from \$750 to a maximum of \$39,500. So I say to myself, how come they haven't levied the maximum fine that is currently in the books? Why is it that if the maximum is \$100,000 by way of possible fines—and what they have levied so far, by the evidence that I have looked at, is only \$39,000. So I ask myself, are we using the law to the fullest extent at the moment, and if not, why not? If we introduce a new law that says that we're going to increase the fines by X amount and it's going to go up to \$250,000, is that what we desperately need or needed to be able to get people in

compliance if \$100,000 wasn't enough?

1710

That, to me, is a bit confusing. I just don't understand why we have not levied the maximum allowable so as to be able to justify an increase in the fine from \$100,000 to \$250,000. It's just a question I ask the minister or the parliamentary assistant or anybody who might speak to this bill after I have ended my remarks because it certainly could use some clarification.

So when the government says, "We're going to do this because we need to be able to have a strong enforcement measure that allows us to protect our students," please defend why you haven't used the extent of the law currently and why it is that you need to double the fines. if not a little more, to be able to get the kind of enforcement you want. I don't get it.

There is no difference in the enforcement other than the amount. Nothing has changed, just the amount. It would be a curious thing for me to hear one of the members explain that, because the measures are not particularly stronger. You have had this power in the Private Career Colleges Act since 2005 and from what I see, you haven't been using that very well.

The other change that the bill makes is that it increases the scope of the power of the superintendent—where they were able to, in the past, set out standards, performance indicators, set out credentials that private career colleges may grant—to something that allows them to do the following: "A policy directive issued under subsection (1) may revoke an approval for a vocational program" and/or "the revocation of an approval is effective as of the date specified in the policy directive." Further, "In the case of the revocation of an approval for a vocational program or class of vocational programs, the effective date of the revocation specified in the directive or determined in accordance with the directive applies despite"—and it goes on, blah, blah, blah.

I'm not sure what this particular little addition does by increasing the scope of the superintendent's power, but if the superintendent needs this to be a little more effective, God bless. I say, go ahead, Minister. Change the act. It doesn't seem to me as if it's a strong, effective measure that will get us to crack down on the illegal operators, but

if it helps you, Minister, God bless.

It also allows for some other changes where section 43 is amended. The Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act currently says, "A person may apply to the minister for a consent and for a renewal of a consent.

"The minister shall refer every application for a consent or renewal of a consent to the Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board.

"The minister shall not grant or reject an application

unless he or she has received a recommendation from the board.

"The minister's decision on whether to give or renew a consent is final."

That section is amended by the following, where it says, "A person may apply to the minister for consent and for a renewal of a consent.

"(2) Subject to subsection (2.1), the Minister shall,

"(a) refer applications for a consent or renewal of a consent to the Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board or another accrediting or quality assurance body or authority, in accordance with the regulations, if

"(b) refer elements of an application for a consent or renewal of a consent to the Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board and elements to another accrediting or quality assurance body or authority...."

This is the new addition to this particular section of the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act. What it does, in my mind, is that it potentially makes things a little easier by reducing some bureaucracy here or there, and I say to the minister, if that helps you, God

These changes, in my view, are not extraordinary. Referring the application to other accrediting or quality assurance bodies or authorities—okay—and reject an application without making a referral in the prescribed circumstances—I say, okay. If the minister believes, for a policy reason, that he can reject or approve something so as to be able to expedite matters. I say God bless. Minister. If it makes your job easier, go ahead and do it.

These are the major changes that the bill makes. I don't believe they're terribly substantive. I don't believe they change enforcement in any way, while they're claiming they do. I don't believe it's going to affect the quality of post-secondary education very much. The government claims that it will. That's why I was quoting the minister, because if you read his statement—and I want to read some parts of it for the record—you get a different impression of the bill.

"Ontario is moving to protect Ontario's reputation for excellence in post-secondary education ... at home and abroad." The action we are taking today "will assure students that post-secondary programs offered here in Ontario are of the highest quality and meet our standards of excellence." I don't know; I really don't know. We're introducing "amendments to the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act" to "protect both international and Ontario students." I don't know. We have fines currently in place. They exist in the Private Career Colleges Act. We're not changing the act very much. The protections are not increasing drastically. We're just adding a little number, and we claim that we're protecting international students and their quality. I don't know, Minister.

The minister says, "We believe that we need more and stronger tools of enforcement, much like the changes we have made to our Private Career Colleges Act." Other than increasing the fine, there is nothing in this billnothing else. But if you read the ministerial statement, you get the impression he's doing something drastically different.

He says, "I have noted that our Private Career Colleges Act has strong enforcement measures that allow us to protect students. Today, we are proposing amendments to further strengthen our enforcement of this act," suggesting that what they had in place was not very strong and that now, with the introduction of this bill, it will be better and stronger. Other than increasing the number, it makes absolutely no difference. The highest penalty paid so far is \$39,000, well short of the limit of \$100,000. So in my mind, I really don't know why we have to increase that amount to \$250,000 to get better enforcement. I don't get it.

That's about it. That's the ministerial statement. There isn't much to this bill. It's a little bill. It's a little blahblah bill that makes a few minor changes, but that's the extent of Bill 43. It's hard to oppose. Of course, we're likely to support it, because why would you oppose a nothing bill? It doesn't hurt; it doesn't do much, but it certainly doesn't hurt, so it will be very difficult for us to oppose it on those grounds.

Speaker, I really don't want to take any more of your time—really, I don't, because it can be exhausting for you, I know. I don't want to exhaust my Liberal friends because they get tired easily. So I'm just going to end my remarks. I think we're done with this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments.

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's my pleasure to rise in this House and contribute to the discussion on Bill 43, the proposed Post-secondary Education Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010.

The introduction of this legislative amendment will support our Open Ontario plan. Based on that plan, we are going to create new opportunities, jobs and growth for our young people. Also, the proposed amendments to this act are going to assure students of the post-secondary system in our universities and colleges that the programs and quality of education, which our post-secondary education system is offering them, will be of the highest available standard.

It also will further protect our students and strengthen Ontario's reputation for excellence in higher education, not only at home but around the world.

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As you know, the 21st-century job market requires that at least 70% of jobs require some kind of postsecondary education. Based on that criterion, which we are going to say in the 21st century, we are going to increase the number of graduates from our universities and post-secondary colleges from the current 63% to 70%. This is one of the premises of this amendment, to increase the number of students in post-secondary education. For that reason, we are going to increase by 20,000 the spots in our universities and colleges for our young people. That is what this amendment is all about. We know that our young people are our assets. They are the future of our country, they are the future of our province, and for that reason we are bringing these kinds of amendments and also investing heavily in our postsecondary education system, as we have been doing since we took office in 2003.

At every university and every college you can see the construction and investments and all of that—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. The member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: I stayed specifically this afternoon to hear the member from Trinity-Spadina. His passion and understanding of this particular type of bill is something to listen and learn from, because he believes very strongly and passionately in the importance of education and its relationship to our economy and our quality of life. I commend him for his diligence on that.

It's a bill that he says is kind of tinkering. Its objective is, I guess—there are some provisions that exist today that could be enforced.

It's my understanding there was a visitation last week by the private career colleges, many of whom are quite reputable, that are members of this program. They were blindsided with this. Open Ontario is closing Ontario. Because what this does, if you look here, is actually increasing fines. But if you're going to fine one of them that's going out of business, you'll have trouble collecting the money because they can't pay back the tuition in failed programs. Your point is very well taken.

The other part too—there are penalties. That's most of the bills that come in here. They're increasing the price of electricity and all the fines, all the licensing, all the permits because they have a revenue problem, big time.

Here's the real issue, though: It's payback time for the working families. If you look at the section here on the private career colleges, what subsection 53(1) does is revoke vocational training institutes that exist today and their ability to deal with vocational programming. This opens it up for the new College of Trades, run by Pat Dillon and others, to open their own college. This is a big payback. I bet they bought a table at the Premier's dinner. I would like to have a list of those people who are—but this bill here to me is an example of a government that's catering to a certain audience and a certain voter group. It does nothing for students whatsoever—nothing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Ouestions and comments?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I was very entertained, as usual, by the comments by the member from Trinity—Spadina.

I want to say to you that our post-secondary institutions in this province are remarkable. They are strong. I am the father of four girls, one who studied at Queen's, one who studied at Laurentian and one who studied at Sault College and got her degree from Algoma University. I know the folks in Ontario want to make sure that our post-secondary institutions are first-rate, and they are.

This act does some things that I think were needed—well, I know were needed. The amendments would strengthen the ability of the government to shut down unscrupulous and unauthorized educational organizations and prevent them from taking advantage of international and Ontario students. The amendments would assure students that post-secondary programs offered here in Ontario are of the highest quality and meet the standards of excellence.

By introducing these measures, we are furthering the ability of this province to ensure that those 70% of jobs that are available only to folks with post-secondary educations are of the highest quality. That's what this is about. It's about ensuring quality for Ontario students and international students who come here.

I am very pleased that we have this bill before the House and look forward to the support of all members.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: It's interesting that yesterday one of the national newspapers talked about repayment of student loans. About a year ago, the public accounts committee reviewed the record of the Ontario government in collecting the repayment of student loans. It had slipped from a rate of 13% when the government came to power in 2003 to 17%. When asked in the meeting why the ministry of colleges and universities had not reached their goal of 13%, the director simply said, "We changed our target." So it didn't matter whether they had a target of 13% or 17%: "We just changed our target."

The interesting part is that in the United States, how they control the quality of education in private colleges is by limiting the ability of students going to that private institution in terms of their ability to get money from the government for student loans. If they're not producing graduates who can go out and earn enough money to pay their student loans, that private institution is shut off. It doesn't matter whether it's private or public. So it drives not only a better student repayment rate, but it also puts aside anybody who doesn't have a good program.

Under our system, there is no penalty. If you encourage a young person into your institution, public or private, and you say, "Borrow \$30,000," if you don't give a good program you still get another student in the

next year and you can do the same trick.

So why not do it that way, rather than do it through this bill?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Trinity-Spadina has up to two minutes to respond

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It would have been nicer if I had more time to respond to the member from Carleton—Mississippi Mills, and the member from Durham, who raised a good point as well: If an institution goes bankrupt, how do you go after those people? They're good points.

I just wanted to respond to my friend from Algoma—Manitoulin and my other friend from Richmond Hill.

By the way, it's got nothing to do with our children going to university—mine went to U of T and the other one to Ryerson University. So that's not the point. The point has to do with the fact that my friend from Manitoulin and my friend from Richmond Hill didn't listen to a single word I said. In particular, my friend from Richmond Hill repeated exactly, word for word, what the minister said, and that's what I was attacking throughout my speech. So you wonder sometimes, don't people listen? Why don't you just dispute what I said rather than repeating what the minister said, which I just attacked for 40 minutes; rather than just giving more blah, blah, blah? It doesn't make any sense.

They both said that this is new opportunities for jobs and growth. No. This has nothing to do with new opportunities for jobs and growth, nothing at all. The minister said the same thing, but it's not in this bill. It's got nothing to do with this bill. They say quality will be improved. Like what? What kind of quality? The fact that the superintendent is now going to have a broader scope, and policy directives that can now be given by the minister to make it easier to revoke something or not—that doesn't change very much by way of quality.

Both members say we're going to shut down unscrupulous organizations. No, this bill doesn't do that. It just increases the fine. Unless you put the resources to make sure that people don't start before they become so unscrupulous with those students and hurt them so much, this bill does nothing to deal with the issues that you purport to be dealing with.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm delighted to stand up and speak in support of the proposal, the legislative amendment to the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2002.

I listened to my colleague, the member from Trinity—Spadina, for almost, I would say, 30 minutes.

It's important for all of us in this place—and we heard it many different times. So many different colleges, so many different fly-by-night organizations, go across the border or outside Canada, or inside Canada, and offer students an education. For some reason, they go bankrupt; they don't follow through on their promises. The students end up getting caught in these circumstances. They pay the money, they lose the money. As a matter of fact, there is no punishment for the person who is putting these people in this dilemma.

That's why I believe this amendment would create some kind of safety mechanism for the people of Ontario. For all of the people who want to come to Canada to study, we want to make sure all the people who come to this province, who come to our institutions, get the best possible education.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's got nothing to do with the bill.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: This is why we amended this bill. I don't know, maybe you're not going to believe that, but this was our direction. This was our direction, and this amendment to create a safety mechanism for many different people who want to study, the people—

Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: It's very important to put some kind of deterrent, some kind of punishment on the people who are going to break the law. It's important to all of us to create that safety mechanism, because the people deserve respect, and when they come to this province, they believe they're coming to credible institutions. Therefore, we have to create that credibility for them and allow them to come and study and pursue their education in a professional manner.

Another step in this is that we're talking about how we can maintain the high quality of education. I live in the city of London and I represent, of course, London–Fanshawe. We, in the city of London and the region, proudly talk about the best institutions in the province of Ontario: the University of Western Ontario, Fanshawe College. We visit those institutions all the time to study how we can strengthen their ability to provide the students in this province with the best education, and also to attract more students to come and study in our city.

I think it's very important to build on our strategy to create credible institutions, to give them the support they need, whether financial support, capital support, operating support—all these levels are important to attract more students to come to this province and study.

This is what gives the minister and the government the ability to have some kind of say, to strengthen our ability in this province because we have a lot to offer—we have a lot of things to offer. Many people from around the globe ask to come to Canada, and they ask us on a regular basis, because they've heard about our institutions: What about McMaster? What about University of Toronto? What about Mohawk College or Fanshawe College or Western?

Mr. Mario Sergio: York University.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: York University, University of Ottawa. All these universities in the province of Ontario provide good jobs for all the people in this province, therefore—

Interjections.

Mr. Mario Sergio: All good stuff. They don't get it.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: We're talking about education in general. We don't specify—

Mrs. Julia Munro: You're not interested in debating the bill.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Yes, this is the bill. I'm just talking about this amendment to strengthen our quality of education in the province of Ontario. It's going to give the minister the ability to offer the students the best and the highest level of education. That's what this is all about.

It's also about fly-by-night institutions that come to the province and open. We want to make sure that the students who go to these institutions aren't being punished. Whether you believe it or not, this was our intention in this bill, to create a safety mechanism for all the students and make sure all the people who come and study in this province at any university, college or institution get the accreditation they need or they get the education they need, because it's very important for all of us.

Also, we talk about Open Ontario for other people. I think it's important. From this amendment, we give the authority for the province of Ontario, for the universities to use the capacity of the spaces to allow people to come. I think it's very important for all of us to see how much we can offer the whole world and how much we can offer to humanity and science and education.

I get the chance to travel sometimes from country to country and people always ask me, "How can we come to Ontario and study?" because they've heard about our good education in this province. I think—

Mr. John O'Toole: Read the Ombudsman's report.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm sorry?

Mr. John O'Toole: Read the Ombudsman's report.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: If you don't believe in the province of Ontario or you don't believe in education, it's a different story. Myself, I'm a strong believer that we have the best institutions in the whole world, the best education system, the best universities and the best

colleges. That's why you want to build the capacity to allow people to come and study more, to open it up to make it accessible to all students, because it's our obligation and duty.

It's an important part of our strategy to open this province up to many different people to come and study, and to make it affordable and attractive in terms of the high quality. This is our plan. It's always our plan to attract people from across the planet to come to this province. I think part of our budget bill was the Open Ontario plan, through which we can invite students from around the globe to come to the province of Ontario and study and seek our potential and our capacity, and learn from us because we have a lot to offer.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Provide opportunities.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: We have good opportunities for people from around the planet to come and study and learn, and that's our strength.

I got a chance to go to Saudi Arabia, not a long time ago, and I met with so many different students; I met with professors and I went to the universities to see the system. When they learned we were from Canada, they were so thrilled to ask us how they could go to Canada and study, how they could go to university in Canada, how they could go study in this province because they heard about our quality and our education.

That's why we want to build on this strategy. We want to make sure that all people can come, especially for post-secondary education, and that they choose the province of Ontario. Also, you want to make sure that all the people who come to this province get the best education and the best opportunity, and also make sure that all the education they get will be certified and accredited, not just in the province of Ontario, not just in Canada, but around the globe.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Quality of life. Mr. Khalil Ramal: Quality of life.

I mentioned over and over that we have a beautiful and incredible university in London called Western university. They do an excellent job on a regular basis.

Last Friday, I had the chance to go with my colleague Chris Bentley and the mayor and the president of the university to open a place in London. It was a wind tunnel. It's the first of its kind in the whole world to study tornadoes and the movement of wind. When they build this one, it's going to be incredible for scientists from around the globe to come to the city of London to study the movement of wind, because it will support us to see how we can build houses that resist wind and tornadoes. It's important to find a way to build buildings or houses or towns or cities that are able to resist the wind.

I think this innovation is incredible. It's the first of its kind in the whole world. It's a project supported by the city of London, the province of Ontario and the federal government. The three governments are working together to strengthen our institutions.

Also, after that, I went with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to a place they call Trudell Medical. We launched, not a long time ago, a strategy to support the life sciences in the province of Ontario. All of this was launched in universities and colleges across the province of Ontario, with partnerships between companies and factories and institutions and universities. All of these elements create an environment for students to study—life study—and to partner with companies and factories that show some kind success, whether in medical, wind, engineering, pharmaceutical or whatever we can produce in the province of Ontario. It's the best way to create an environment for students to go study in those places and learn hands-on information and science. It's incredible. It's part of our initiative to strengthen our colleges and our post-secondary education in the province of Ontario.

I know we don't specify certain universities or colleges. We want to work with all of the institutions across the province of Ontario. We want to make sure that all our institutions have a chance and an ability to provide good support for our students. That's what we mean by high standards and high -quality education.

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All of our investments in innovation and research are to feed back to our institutions, like Mohawk College or McMaster University—well known across the planet for the quality of their medical, for instance. It's the same thing with the University of Western Ontario—medical. Waterloo University is well known for the IT system, not just in Canada but around the planet, because they are home to RIM and the BlackBerry. All these companies play a pivotal role in our communities, and those universities play pivotal roles. We, as a government, support any strategy to marry companies with universities and colleges, to make sure all the strength is going in the right direction; to give students the ability, when they go to university to study theoretical stuff, to practise in a factory or practise in a company and get the best education.

I get the chance to meet many different students who got the chance to practise what they studied at college or university. And you know what? Those students, when you teach them at a desk in university or college and then you take them to a factory and tell them, "Look, you can apply your knowledge on this. You can apply it to this equipment, chemical products or drugs, whatever you want to produce"—it will be important for all of us.

All these initiatives will create an important mechanism for our colleges and universities to increase the capacity and quality and make sure all institutions will be well accredited, well monitored, and no one will play games across the province to cripple any student or anyone who wants to study in this province. It will help us to attract more students from many different communities around the planet to come to Ontario to study and learn from us what we have in this province.

Therefore, I think this is a good initiative, because when students come to this province, they learn for maybe four years, six years or seven years and establish a good relationship with this nation, with the community, with the people of this province, and when they go back home to their native land, there's a big possibility that

they will come back as president of a company, a minister, a governor or in whatever capacity and also start a good business with the province of Ontario. So it will be a win-win situation.

Also, people who want to stay here can stay. They can find a good opportunity to study and for their families to establish a good life for themselves. A lot of students come from around the planet. They come for two years or four years to study and do their PhDs in this province and they discover the beauty of this land. They discover how much they can do in this province, and then guess what? They apply to stay here.

That's what we want. We want the best-qualified people to come to this nation and either learn from us or

stay.

All these measures and the criteria will be important for all of us across the province of Ontario.

Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Yes. We don't measure by numbers. We don't measure by quantity. We measure by quality.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Skills.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Yes, skills, the brain, the ability, the training.

Mr. Mario Sergio: The professionalism.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Yes, the professionalism. All of these elements will play a pivotal role to enhance our province and give us the ability to keep progressing toward a brighter future. We cannot sustain our advances in science, culture and education without new blood.

That's why we've opened Ontario for many people to come and study here. Also, that's why it's our obligation to increase the capacity of our universities and colleges. I want to make sure those colleges and universities serve the students—

Mr. Mario Sergio: So they can compete.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: —and they can compete nationally and internationally. The traditional life does not exist anymore. If you have a traditional education, it does not work anymore. Now we live on a competitive planet with a competitive economy. That's why we want to equip our students with the best possibilities to be able to compete nationally and internationally. That's the only way we can survive in the future, the only way we can survive in the future, the only way we can maintain our advantage and our ability in Canada or around the globe.

I guess when we measure people, as I mentioned at the beginning, we don't measure them by quantity but we measure them by quality. That's why we want to give the government and the minister a chance to enhance the ability of those colleges and post-secondary education in the province of Ontario to maintain quality and enhance quality, and in the meantime make sure that all the institutions or all the organizations that serve the post-secondary education system in the province of Ontario will be credible and able to afford to give a good education with respect and honour to all the people who want a role in their administration or in the universities, or in post-secondary education. I'm going to support this one here.

I also heard the member from Trinity-Spadina. He has some kind of criticism. That's why we open the floor in this place for debate. That's why we call it debate. We debate a lot of issues, and this part of the issue is open for debate. We don't have to agree, all of us, on the same bill, the same laws and same things. We should debate them all the time, because you know what? Most of the time when I come to this place, I listen to the opposition and I enhance my ability and my knowledge about the same bill we introduced as a government. It's very important to listen to the other side. It's very important to debate those issues over and over, because it's the only way we can get a good bill and good amendments that will serve the people of this province and serve the people who elected us to be here.

That's why I listened to the member from Trinity-Spadina. He has some points; we agree. But it's important when he said, "Despite what's in the bill, I have no other way except supporting this bill." Because we're serving the people of Ontario. He doesn't think it's strong enough, according to his philosophy or ideology, but we think it's the right mechanism; it's a balanced mechanism. Because you know what? We as the Liberal Party, we as a government got elected in this place to create some kind of wave, a balanced wave, a balanced approach, because we want the balance to be in place in the province of Ontario. That's why I think many people will agree with us, to have good quality and to protect the education system, and also to open Ontario to the people who want to come and study in this province, because it's important to share our knowledge; it's important to keep working with the rest of the world to give us strength and ability as a province.

We're not just giving education to people and helping people to be educated. It will also be an economical force, because the students who want to come to Ontario bring with them some kind of wealth—they're going to spend money—mobility, new blood, new ideas and new visions. So I think it's not just an educational component in this proposed amendment; it's also an economic component. The students who come from abroad to study here are going to come with some money, they're going to pay tuition, all to enhance and support our post-secondary education. They're also going to spend in our communities and give us some kind of knowledge and skills which otherwise we wouldn't be exposed to.

I think it's an important tool; it's an important amendment. I hope that all my colleagues in the House will support it to give the minister the chance to continue with his mission to strengthen our colleges and universities and to strengthen our ability in this province to be able to host as many students as possible in this province, and to strengthen our institutions to help us attract a lot of students to come and learn from us in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you and thank all the people who are listening, if they are listening. Hopefully, in the end all of us will support our way, in order to open the door for a lot of students who are waiting for us to finish with this debate and also be able to come here and study. Also the students who are already here, I want to

tell them, if we pass this amendment, we'll make sure that whatever education they get will be accredited and will be honoured. If they've started their first year, they'll finish all the way without any interruptions.

Thank you for allowing me to stand up and speak. Hopefully, the rest of my colleagues will enhance our ability and ideas and enhance our direction from—

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Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Yes, when they talk and tell us what they think we're supposed to do in this amendment.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I have two minutes in which to make a couple of comments. The first one that strikes me is the reluctance of the previous speaker to actually speak about private career colleges. I was listening for when he was going to talk about the bill and private career colleges. The only reference that I picked up was something about "fly-by-night." For those legitimate businesses that have been in this province in some cases for decades, to have the only reference made as the concern over "fly-by-night" I think does a huge disservice to the legitimate private career colleges that have existed in this province for decades.

The other point I have an opportunity to make is that, as a previous speaker mentioned, the organization of the private career colleges actually came to Queen's Park last week and were totally blindsided by the fact that the government had introduced this bill. That tells me two things, the most serious of which is the question of consultation. How would it be possible for a group of people not to know that the ministry they report to or with which they have a special legal arrangement would not have informed them of the introduction of this bill? That would be a courtesy, but more important is the lack of consultation, when they find themselves in that position of being blindsided.

When I listened to the member for London-Fanshawe talk about universities and colleges, I know why they were blindsided.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just wanted to say there is very little in this bill. That's all.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Pat Hoy: An interesting comment from my friend across the way.

For a good time taken, the member for London–Fanshawe did speak about what was in this bill and did a very concise and expansive overview, quite contrary to the speaker just before me, in contrast to his comments, most assuredly.

What the government is talking about here is quality education for all. That's something that we're very proud to provide to the citizens of Ontario, and we want to continue that, so we have Bill 43 before us. It provides some means of protection for those who live here in Ontario who want to acquire that education, and also for

the newcomers who are coming to Ontario and who recognize Ontario as a place to come and live and have themselves or their children be educated.

There is some conversation about private career colleges. For the first time in 30 years, our government transformed the way private career colleges are governed and created substantial measures to protect the students. That's what this is about.

Certainly, this isn't to say that all private career colleges need this, but in the case that there might be a bad actor out there, we recently introduced fines for these operations that might be illegal—fines that can range from \$250 to \$1,000 per day, to a maximum of \$250,000. That's part of the protection that we have put in place. But more so of what we want to do is provide quality education on an ongoing basis here in Ontario for those folks who look forward to and demand and need quality education in this new, modern day and age.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I agree with my colleague from York North as well. She outlined what was not said. If you look at the bill, there are some troubling aspects to it, some of which I think should be clear here. For example, if you look at subsection 2(3), "greater certainty"—that's about the distinguishing characteristics of trades and occupations—I'm suspicious about that.

Also, "physical presence": This is to say if a college or university or a skilled trade area is located in Ontario. "For the purposes of clause (1)(a), evidence of physical presence in Ontario includes one or more of the following"—it says if they have a head office here, or a postal address, or a contact with employment, that means

they have an Ontario presence.

The thing here is, it's actually going to take foreign students and offer them, at double or quadruple the tuitions, programs that could be offered by so-called universities or colleges registered in Ontario, but they'd

be physically located somewhere else.

If you look at this, there's a lot of stuff in here that's quite treacherous. Much of this is to deal with virtual universities—distance education, it's called. If you look at sections 4 and 5, there's a whole section in here on a program or part of a program conferring degrees: "a distance education program or part of a distance education program of post-secondary study leading to a degree to be conferred by a person outside of Ontario...."

I graduated from the University of Toronto, as did many people here. I applaud them. I had five children and they all graduated from Ontario universities and

other law schools etc.

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: You're trying to say that we don't. I'm saying exactly the opposite. You are not being forward with the people of Ontario.

For instance, why did you outsource the energy to Samsung when we have some of the finest universities in Ontario?

There's no respect for our current educational system whatsoever on that side of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for London-Fanshawe, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I listened to the members from York-Simcoe and Durham, and to my colleague the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex.

To the member from York-Simcoe, I spoke about the career colleges. We respect all of the people who want to open in the province of Ontario, but it's our job as a government to create a protection mechanism and to make sure that all the people who want to come to study in this province will be accredited, will finish their education—not for the door to be closed and their money to be lost.

Also, to the member from Durham, I don't know what he-

Mr. John O'Toole: Read the bill.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I read the bill 100%. It's all focused on education. If you don't like it, that's up to you.

We want to open Ontario and make sure that all the colleges are monitored and that quality of education exists in the province of Ontario. We respect all the colleges and universities in this province, and it's our job to create a protection mechanism.

My colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex was right: We're talking about the quality of education; we're talking about accessibility. We want to make sure that people who study in Ontario, or from outside of Ontario-when they come, they should know that their education will be protected. It's our job to make sure all of these career colleges follow the rules and regulations of this province. We don't want to fool anyone. We don't want to create any problems for any student from anywhere. Of course, anybody can argue, anyone can come and debate, but the most important thing is our integrity, our protections for people who want to study in this place. That's what it's all about. That's what we're talking about in this place, and that's what we're debating today: higher education, accessibility, and welcoming people from anywhere to come and study here.

We have the best universities, the best colleges, and hopefully, after we pass this bill, the best career colleges will be in Ontario and anyone can come to study and learn. We are willing to share the knowledge, and we welcome anyone to come to this province.

Again, thanks to all the people who spoke.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): There are a number of timepieces I can refer to, but I have one that tells me that it's very close to 6 of the clock.

This House is adjourned until 9 of the clock on Thursday, May 6.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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, ,	Nepean	
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Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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	Dufferin-Caledon	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Newmarket-Aurora	
Klees, Frank (PC)		Third Davis, Harris I and an / I and an analysis and most recommy
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea-Gore-Malton	
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r upateno, 11011. / L non. Sanura (LID)	windsor west/ windsor-ouest	Développement économique et du Commerce
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Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London-Fanshawe	
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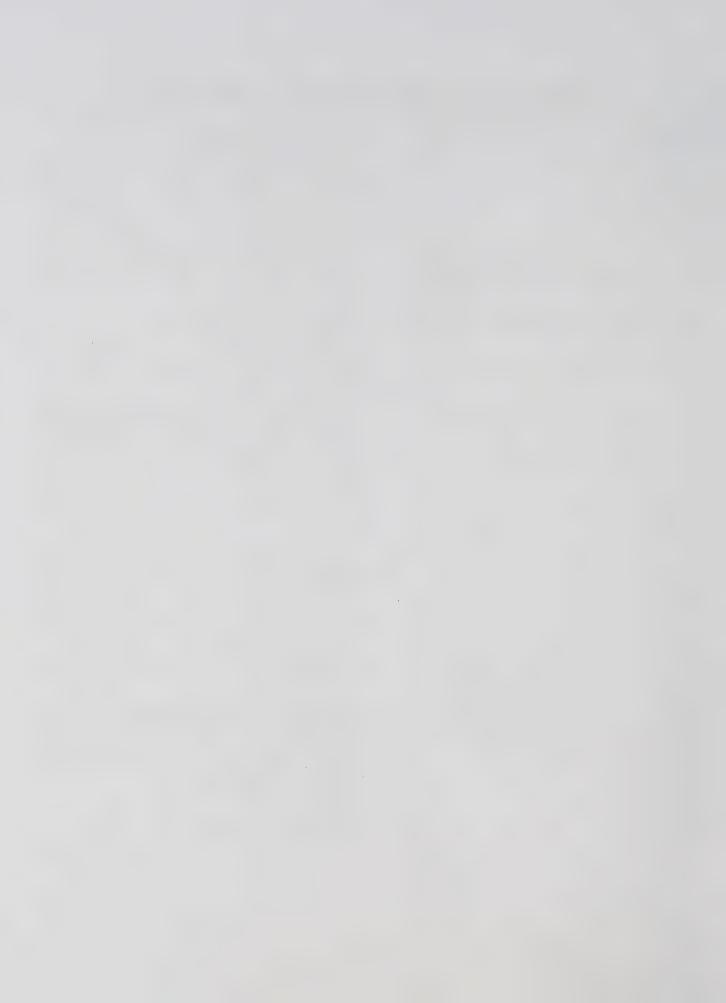
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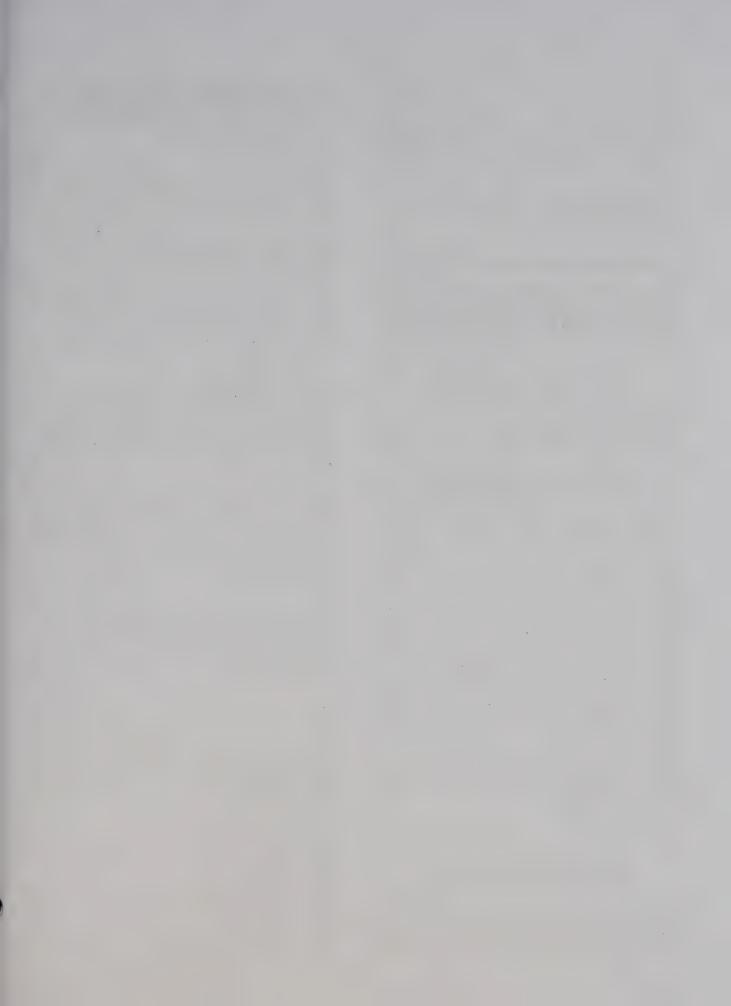
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Jeudi 6 mai 2010

Speaker Honourable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 6 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 6 mai 2010

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for personal thought and inner reflection.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'ENSEIGNEMENT POSTSECONDAIRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 5, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 favorisant le choix et l'excellence au niveau postsecondaire, la Loi de 2005 sur les collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel et la Loi de 2002 sur l'École d'art et de design de l'Ontario

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: It's certainly a pleasure for me today to speak to Bill 43, which is going to amend three other pieces of legislation. There are going to be amendments to the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005, and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002. This bill does move forward in order to make changes to those three pieces of legislation. Basically, it's dealing with our post-secondary education system and the colleges and universities in the province of Ontario.

I'm certainly pleased to have in my own community two outstanding universities, the University of Waterloo and, of course, Wilfrid Laurier University. We have an outstanding college as well, Conestoga College, which has demonstrated its leadership in all of Canada, as have our universities time and time again.

I'm also pleased to say that we have many private colleges that do an outstanding job, as well, to ensure that our students get the post-secondary education that is going to be so critical if this province is to succeed and become an economic leader once again. Regrettably, at the

current time we seem to be at the bottom, and we need to make sure that we listen to Rick Miner's report, which indicates to us that our goal must be 70% of our young people moving toward a post-secondary education in the next number of years.

If we just take a look briefly at the first act, the Postsecondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, I see that that particular piece of legislation is intended to protect both our international and Ontario students, because the government has indicated that there's going to be an increased focus on international students. That should be interesting to see.

I think we would certainly concur in one change that is going to be made now, and that is the change to the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002. We certainly strongly support, and I think our critic, Jim Wilson, has already put on the record, that we very strongly agree with the changes that are being contemplated there and that it will indeed become a university. We have supported that for a long time, and we're really pleased that that is going to happen. I understand that the NDP supports that as well, so that will be pretty simple to deal with. But there are certainly other concerns around this bill.

I think one of the biggest concerns around the bill is some of the changes that are being proposed. The government has actually had the power for the last number of years, you probably know, to make changes to the colleges. They also announced four years ago that they were going to review these acts, and they didn't get to it. In the intervening time, the Ombudsman has certainly indicated his unhappiness. In fact, he came out with a report that indicated, in talking about the private career colleges: "The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is responsible for overseeing over 400 private career colleges and protecting student consumers against unscrupulous and incompetent training providers."

He refers to 2006 and the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005, coming into force. He refers to the fact that it did give the ministry "broader and more enhanced powers of enforcement, and students with greater protections including access to refunds and alternate training when colleges unexpectedly close their doors." Then he went on to say, and was very critical of the government: "Despite the fact that it is illegal to operate a private career college that is not registered with the ministry, a considerable number of unregistered training facilities do exist in Ontario, presenting a risk to unwary consumers. The ministry is cognizant of this reality. However, it does not vigorously pursue information about or enforcement against rogue operators."

I guess the government could have taken action, they didn't, and now they've come out with some changes. We know he was talking, at that time, about Bestech Academy, which was falsely marketing itself as a registered vocational college.

Let's take a look at this piece of legislation. I just referred to the fact that the government already had the power to fine unscrupulous private colleges and unfortunately failed to enforce its own legislation. So we see here the government expanding those powers now to the private universities as well. I've referred to the fact that the Ombudsman did, on July 14, 2009, deliver this scathing report of the ministry's handling of the Bestech Academy, which we all know was an illegal career college that the government allowed to operate for more than two years.

Interestingly enough, despite it being illegal, the government funded many of its programs, and then I understand that they hired its president to work for the ministry. It is that type of situation that the Ombudsman, looking at it, was then forced to say, "The ministry is inept. The situation is a disaster, in light of the way you've handled it. You had the legislative means to shut it down, and you didn't." Here we are with a bill that goes beyond private colleges today and seeks to expand its power into the private universities as well, even though they haven't been able to enforce rules that were in place since 2006.

Let's just take a look at that sector. There are currently, in the province today, 425 career colleges, 500 campuses and more than 27,684 students in Ontario pursuing degrees in 3,425 approved programs in more than 70 communities. When we talk about this bill expanding its jurisdiction beyond the private colleges to the private universities, what are some of the privately funded universities in Ontario? They include such places as Emmanuel Bible College, the Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies and the Maimonides Schools of Jewish Studies, to name but a few. There are 29 other institutions that offer degree programs by ministerial consent. These private institutions include the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, Cornell University, Niagara University and Trinity Western University. Public institutions are colleges permitted to grant degrees instead of diplomas, and they include Sheridan, Seneca, Niagara, Loyalist and other Ontario colleges. If you recall, the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act was brought in under the Harris government to allow for the expansion of some of the Ontario-based private universities that I have just referred to. That act also did initiate some very strict regulation of those institutions. That's how this all connects, one to the other.

Some of the changes that would occur, if passed: It would add to the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act definitions for "educational institution," "distance education" and "degree." It would prohibit advertising of distance education programs not located in Ontario unless authorized to grant a degree in the province—that's a good thing. It would allow the minister to

refer applications for consent or renewal of consent for private institutions to either the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board, as is the case now, or another quality assurance body or authority. It would allow the minister to reject applications by private institutions without referral to the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board. It would initiate tougher inspection requirements for the private universities, because they're being included here now, that parallel those in the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005. It would increase some of the provincial offence penalties for private universities and career colleges.

So some of these changes certainly are going to be to the benefit of the students, but at the end of the day, the ministry has had powers. They could have used those powers; they didn't. Obviously, they're now bringing in a bill, Bill 43, to make sure that in the province of Ontario, we do provide a quality education, we can guarantee that we are doing so and we can also protect students from any unscrupulous operators that might be out there. Obviously, there are always those who would take a student's money and not offer the quality program that we would expect.

I think I'm going to end there. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm very happy. The member from Kitchener-Waterloo has been a former minister and educator and I think has offered some very valid comments on a bill that purports to do something but under closer examination fails to actually do very much.

Some of the powers that exist on the investigatory authority are already there. The Ombudsman, in his scathing report on the lack of action by this government on this Ontario-open-for-business theory, really tells the story that they're not using the tools and rules they have effective today.

I think the member from Kitchener-Waterloo, in her gentle reminders to the government to get on with business—she does that so cordially, if you will. There's very little respect in Ontario right now for some of the current universities. If you actually look at the clippings this morning, there's a report that I felt, when I was looking at the media—I just want to put this on the record that the career colleges are quite disappointed with this government's lack of consultation. They really are. I know they have spoken to you, Mr. Speaker, because you're obviously the contact for this particular group, and they are very disappointed with this government.

All I can say to you is this: The bill says that it's going to make it easier for other colleges to start, but also to be enforced. It talks about virtual universities. If you look at the bill, it talks about virtual universities actually being outside of Ontario. I think they should work more closely with the existing colleges and enforce the existing rules, rather than waste the time of this House to do something that it says it's doing but it's not. The intent is there, so we'll likely, at the end of the day, support it, and I think there will be more said this morning on this bill than the minister wants to hear.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: The Ombudsman, in his July 2009 report, referred to a "systemic failure" on the part of the government "to ensure that the requirements of the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 are adequately enforced in order to protect the public interest in the quality and accountability of vocational training in this province."

He also said, "I am concerned that unless there are some fundamental changes in how the ministry does its business, individuals seeking to better their lives through vocational training will still be at the mercy of ruthless

and incompetent illegal operators."

We hope that things have changed and we hope that this bill will facilitate the kinds of changes that the Ombudsman called for. However, we take issue with the fact that, while doing a little bit of good here, you decided to present a view of the current state of post-secondary education in the province that requires a real reality check.

The minister claimed in his remarks that "Ontario's post-secondary education system is recognized for the quality of programs offered by our colleges and universities. We are a leader in quality assurance for our post-secondary education system. This is a reputation we

value highly and aim to protect."

If that's the case, why are there unaccredited colleges around here that are giving bogus degrees? People are spending a year or two of their lives trying to get these degrees and they go look for a job and the degree isn't worth the paper it's written on; it doesn't hold water, and they end up having wasted two years of their lives—

pretty bad.

There are other things: Will more international students result in reductions in tuition for Ontario and Canadian students? After we reach a high enough threshold of international students, will class sizes somehow start to decrease? Will the increased fees and other monies from international students be used to hire more full-time faculty? I'm not sure about this. Will students' debt loads be lessened by the greater presence of international students? I doubt it. Will international students somehow eliminate the estimated \$1.7 billion required to address deferred maintenance across Ontario? I doubt it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I'm always delighted to stand in my place and respond to the balanced offerings from the honourable member from Kitchener-Waterloo, who, given her vast experience, understands so many of the complexities. Most importantly, I think the honourable member opposite understands that governments, and policies related to specific options that governments have, aren't always perfect; that we have an Ombudsman and other mechanisms in place to occasionally draw to the attention of the government areas where some improvements can be made.

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We take the Ombudsman's comments very seriously. We also continue to take very seriously the issues of

quality in our education system and the need to protect students. It's for the very reasons that the member from Hamilton East articulated with respect to the need for fundamental changes and his allegations of systemic failures that, in part, this bill is coming forward. We want to strengthen an already good system and make it even better, and to do that we need to be very clear about definitions. We need to be very sharp about what we measure. This bill takes us some considerable distance, I say respectfully to members of this Legislative Assembly, in that direction. That, I think, has to be good for the people of Ontario, particularly the students who are investing their time, their energy and their talent in trying to acquire the skills to build an even stronger Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further ques-

tions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to respond to my colleague's comments. Certainly she's an extremely experienced member of this Legislature, as a former Minister of Education. I'm pleased to say that when I attended university in Waterloo, I certainly enjoyed it. I said to the member just prior to her speech this morning that I hope to visit her constituency soon to relive and rekindle some old acquaintances.

In regard to her comments about Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Choice and Excellence Act, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002, it's interesting that the previous speaker talked about the Ombudsman's report. I had the opportunity to look at this report and, quite frankly, I was shocked that this government hasn't brought forward changes prior to this, given some of the history. When I look at some of the issues: that the government already has the power to fine private colleges that they feel deserve it; the fact that they failed to enforce some of their own legislation; the fact that the Ombudsman's report back in July 2009 was so critical of the government; the fact that they were looking for this government to bring forward some changes-you know, going through the pages of this Too Cool for School report, it's shocking to me, the changes that should have come forward by this government sooner. The fact that they knew that changes needed to be made and they weren't is, again, surprising to me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for Kitchener-Waterloo has up to two

minutes for her response.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I do appreciate the contributions that have been made by the member for Durham, the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, the member for Leeds—Grenville and of course the member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale. I tell you, it takes almost a minute to read through the names of some of the ridings in the province of Ontario here. But I do appreciate the contribution.

I also want to take this opportunity today to congratulate our critic for post-secondary education, Mr. Wilson. I think he's done an outstanding job in bringing forward

information about this bill, Bill 43.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You won't get interrupted by the Speaker on this one.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: You know what? It's always a pleasure to get his advice on legislation that the government is bringing forward.

I think you've probably heard that the one issue we are most concerned about is the fact that the government did have the power to deal with these private colleges and chose not to act. We now have in place tougher legislation, supposedly. Hopefully, this will enable the government to move forward and ensure that all of the students in the province of Ontario are protected. Of course, as well, we've seen the expansion of this power to private universities.

At the end of the day, we'll continue to review the bill. We'll continue, obviously, under the leadership of our critic, to hear from those who are going to be impacted by the legislation, because our job truly is to listen to the people in the province of Ontario, bring forward their concerns and make the bill the best it can be.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Leal: It's a delight for me to spend a moment this morning on the proposed Post-secondary Education Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010. I've always been very pleased: In my riding of Peterborough, I happen to have two post-secondary institutions. Trent University, which I had the opportunity to graduate from a number of years ago, was founded by a good friend of mine, Tom Symons. He was the founding president of Trent University and certainly did yeoman's service in a variety of areas for the government of Ontario. When Mr. Davis was Premier, Tom Symons led a royal commission called To Know Ourselves, about the need to teach history in elementary and secondary schools in the province of Ontario. He continues to serve in several capacities in terms of his role as a leading educator not only in Ontario but, indeed, throughout Canada.

The second post-secondary institution I have in my community is Fleming College. Fleming College, of course, was founded by David Sutherland, who himself had a distinguished academic career: Ryerson here in Toronto, and then he came to Peterborough to found Fleming College. His wife, Sylvia, as many people will know, was the longest-serving mayor of the city of Peterborough. I had the opportunity to serve with her. I'm also pleased that in terms of Fleming College, they're involved now in training people in the green technology area. I must make reference, this morning: "A new study says Canadian governments can expect an economic return from seed money in green technology, just not as much as from traditional investments.

"The Conference Board of Canada study shows that investments in green technology under government programs in Canada will total \$11.8 billion in the next four years.

"The think tank says Ontario will gain the most economically from its investments because it has the manufacturing base for in-province development of new technologies." That's certainly good news. From time to time, all members of the House quote third party endorsements, so that's a third party endorsement from the Conference Board of Canada.

Also, we note today that Linamar, which is an outstanding manufacturer in Guelph, Ontario, has just inked a deal with a European firm to manufacture green technology in Guelph, Ontario, thereby helping to revitalize Ontario's manufacturing sector. I think those are key developments that we need to chat about.

The proposed PSEC amendments will clarify the application of the act by defining certain terms, such as "degree," "educational institution" and "distance education"; allow the government to impose financial penalties and impose restraining and compliance orders against unauthorized degree-granting institutions; and streamline the application process for consent to offer a degree program by making it more cost-effective and less time-consuming. Those are very important amendments. I've had the experience—indeed, Mr. Speaker, you probably have constituents in your riding who have gone to private career colleges and not had the best experience in the world.

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This business of providing unauthorized degrees, in terms of credibility and transparency, is a very serious problem. I think we've all had the experience of people who talk about mail-order Ph.D.s, where they identify an institution—it could be anywhere throughout the world—mail in \$25 and they mail you back a Ph.D., and then after your name you can have Ph.D.—Dr. Jim Wilson, Ph.D.—because you've attained one of those mail-order Ph.D.s but haven't really fulfilled the qualifications for it. I think that can be a very serious problem indeed.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I think he has several, actually.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): That's how I got into cabinet.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad you said that. You indicated that you got a couple of those mail-order Ph.D.s and got into cabinet. Good for you. I think that's very important.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Good plan.

Mr. Jeff Leal: A very good plan. I think that maybe some of my colleagues will be sending out for mail-order Ph.D.s.

Mr. John O'Toole: I think a couple of them already have them.

Mr. Jeff Leal: My friend from Durham thinks that several already have those Ph.D.s. I'll check their websites to see how many have those Ph.D.s.

Getting back to the more serious side of the debate, it certainly has been a problem. As I said, I'm sure all of us have had constituents come in who have not had the best experiences with private career colleges. One of the things that is particularly disappointing is that they spend a considerable amount of money, enrol with private career colleges, and the end product is not satisfactory at all. In fact, it leaves them in a very disadvantaged

position after going through that. So we think this is a very important bill from that perspective.

I guess I could wander a bit and talk about my private member's bill, but we'll have that debate about pensions in Ontario next Thursday. I'm sure it will be a riveting debate that day.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I'm very supportive.

Mr. Jeff Leal: The member from Algoma-Manitoulin, I think, is coming to the forefront, and I look forward to perhaps hearing his remarks next Thursday as we move that bill forward.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: It's an important bill.

Mr. Jeff Leal: It is an important bill.

I think the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Minister Milloy, and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Minister Hoskins, are certainly the drivers behind this bill. Minister Milloy has heard from a wide variety of people about unscrupulous and unauthorized education organizations, and we want to make sure that this bill prevents these unscrupulous and unauthorized educational organizations from taking advantage of international and Ontario students.

I think governments of all political stripes in Ontario have always had the view that Ontario is open for new Canadians to come here, but we want to guarantee that that is a very positive experience. Over the years, governments of all political stripes, I believe, have been building to make sure that we welcome new Canadians to our country and that their experience is one that they never regret making the decision to come to Ontario and, indeed, to Canada. But many of them arrive here, and unfortunately, we have predators out there who want to take advantage of new Canadians coming in and, like the old snake oil salesmen, often try to sell them a bill of goods very quickly. That can be a very disheartening experience for newcomers, whether they come to Brockville, Ontario, or one of my favourite communities in Leeds-Grenville, Athens, which I had the opportunity to visit a number of years ago with Mr. Runciman.

Mr. Steve Clark: I was there.

Mr. Jeff Leal: The member was there that night. Mr. Runciman invited me down. I was PA to the Minister of the Environment. We did a round table on the Clean Water Act. Mr. Runciman, as always, was very hospitable. The current member was there that evening and we had a great round table; a lot of good questions were discussed, a good exchange. I took back some of the ideas and went out and had a chance to have dinner with some of the people that were there at that evening. I always remember the good folks of Athens and I hope they are doing well, I ask the member from Leeds-Grenville.

These amendments will assure students that postsecondary programs offered here in Ontario are of the highest quality and meet our standards of excellence. There's no doubt that one of the great draws to come to Ontario and Canada today is the strength of our postsecondary institutions; some of them are second to none. I know that many of my friends and associates had an opportunity to go to Queen's, the University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario. In fact, one of Peterborough's most distinguished citizens—he wasn't born in Peterborough but he spent his formative years in Peterborough—is Jim Balsillie, who, with his partner, Mike Lazaridis, of course, is co-CEO of the internationally known company Research in Motion.

As I said, Jim grew up in Peterborough. He spent his formative years in Peterborough and still has family in Peterborough. We're very pleased that he never forgot his roots. A number of years ago, when we built the new Y, he gave in excess of half a million dollars to build that new Y in Peterborough. We're very, very proud of that.

His experience, and one that he shares on a continuous basis, is the need to invest and to make sure that we have the highest standards in Ontario universities. He went to the University of Waterloo and spent a lot of time, of course, on the research side through the co-op program, and he came up with this idea, which has made Ontario and indeed, Canada, a leader in that particular field. We're very proud because he knows that continuous investment in our post-secondary sector is going to pay dividends for us economically down the road.

Again, this legislation is key as part of our Open Ontario concept. These amendments will support our Open Ontario plan to create new opportunities for jobs and growth, which includes raising the number of Ontarians

with a post-secondary education to some 70%.

We know that there is a fundamental shift in the economy in Ontario. If you look at the auto industry, for a good example, three or four years ago, 17 million new units were sold in the North American market. Now that is down to the neighbourhood of 10 to 11 million units per year of new car sales in North America. That has led to a fundamental restructuring of the auto industry in

Also, we have to look at the opportunities that may present themselves. I know that from my riding of Peterborough we have a lot of employees who work with General Motors, particularly in the car plant on the Impala line, and the investments and the fundamental change in terms of the skill level with those employees is something that need to be done in order to retain that competitive position. That can only be done through our work with community colleges and, indeed, universities as part of our Open Ontario plan.

We can see that there will be an organizational review of private institutions and private colleges in Ontario that will be looking at their administrative capacity, ethical conduct, student protection, academic freedom and integrity. That's very important, whether it's a new Canadian or somebody who lives in any of our communities such as Espanola or, indeed, Elliot Lake. If they decide to take advantage of going to a private career college, they want to make sure that they have the confidence that if they enrol in a program, at the end of the day the degree they may receive by going into that program, their credentials or the specifics of the program are there; that they will know that that degree or the credentials they receive have some standing in the broader community when they go out to seek a job. We think that is very important.

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Also, we can provide the opportunity for many international students to come to Ontario. This bill will facilitate that. Certainly in my case, Trent University, in Peterborough, has been very successful in attracting international students for a variety of programs. In fact, we need to link with Canadian embassies and Canadian consular offices throughout the world to attract individuals to come to our nation, because they potentially provide the kind of skills that we're going to require, as we have a declining workforce. It is a very aging workforce that we're challenged with now in Ontario. Indeed, the first big bulge of the baby boomers will start to retire this year.

When I talk to my friends at GE in Peterborough—by the way, last Thursday, they announced the biggest order in their history, \$30 million, to provide 18 large motors for a steel company in China. It's the first time that GE has gotten into the Chinese market, and they did so because of the engineering and technical people that they have in Peterborough. So it's going to be engineered, designed, manufactured and shipped from Peterborough into the Chinese market—again, part of our government's emphasis on skills training to make sure that we can be very competitive in that market.

Indeed, we've had a wonderful exchange program. Engineers from China have been working at the Peterborough operation to assist us, to make sure that we can get those deals and provide Canadian technology around the world, ensuring growth particularly in our hard-hit manufacturing sector.

This is a bill that makes changes to the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002.

One of our distinguished members, Mr. Kwinter—I'll just get his riding here—from York Centre, I believe is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art & Design. I believe he may have spent a period of time on the board. Didn't he, Mr. Brown?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: He did. Very effective.

Mr. Jeff Leal: He has been a leader. Of course, the Kwinter family has certainly been amongst Ontario's great entrepreneurs. They were involved in the food processing industry for many, many years. Mr. Kwinter himself, the member from York Centre, over the years has been involved in a number of financial initiatives here in Ontario and around the world.

He is a classic example of someone who went to the Ontario College of Art & Design, used that formal education and parlayed that into a very successful and innovative career. Indeed, just this past week we honoured him. He now has served 25 years in this very august assembly. He is a man of distinguished integrity who continues to make a contribution each and every day.

I must also say that the previous government did a pretty good job when they brought their amendments into the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act in 2002. I always like to give credit where credit is due. Those changes are also very important as we go forward.

It also is very important, through the Open Ontario brand, that we enhance the quality of Ontario's post-secondary education brand, something that, once we take this throughout the rest of Canada and indeed throughout the world, is going to be very attractive for people who make their decision to come to Ontario and indeed Canada.

Also, through these changes, the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board, when it's implemented, will provide rigorous quality control to protect Ontario students from degree mills. I spent a bit of time talking about those mail-order Ph.D.s that have been obtained in the past. We also think that's a very important thing to do.

The amendments will also clarify the application of the act by defining certain terms, such as "degree," "educational institution" and "distance education," something that all members of the House certainly will be very supportive of. It will allow the government to impose financial penalties and restraining and compliance orders against unauthorized degree-granting organizations, again protecting the education experience that one may go through. It will also streamline the application process for consent to offer a degree program by making it more cost-effective and less time-consuming.

I think it's in all of our interests to make sure that this particular act gets approved. I look forward to further debate. If I had unanimous consent, I could probably go on for a couple more hours, but they may not want that to happen at this particular time. Thank you so much for my opportunity today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I heard a no. Ouestions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I would also like to say that I congratulate the very harmonious remarks made by the member from Peterborough. I know he works hard to represent General Electric and General Motors, which is a good idea.

The things he's saying—he did give some credit, in fairness, to the changes made in 2002. I think this kind of builds on those changes. But I think the most important remark here is that he referred many times to Open Ontario. What Open Ontario is about—and I'm going to read from the speech, so I'm giving some credit, but I want to be a bit critical here; it's our job. "We will aggressively"—this is the Premier I'm reading here—"promote Ontario's post-secondary schools abroad and increase international enrolment by 50%." There's actually going to be a lineup for getting spaces in our universities and colleges. There's a bit of a jam coming up here.

I'd like to point out, as he has done, that one of the good parts is that the other changes to post-secondary announced Monday would lead to it being easier for Ph.D. students to get permanent resident status after they finish a degree. Currently, a Ph.D. student has to have a permanent job offer. This change would, for instance, help one of the candidates here from Azerbaijan, who is at the U of T department of laboratory medicine and patho-

biology; this will help her. There's testimony in the newspaper that I read here. So there are some very good aspects to it, but there are things within the bill that are already allowed to be done. I think the next speakers will probably be talking about the Ombudsman's report, Too Cool for School, and some of the things they aren't doing. It was a bit of a scathing criticism of Mr. Milloy and the McGuinty government.

You can find good in all things if you look hard

enough.

needed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was interesting listening to the member from Peterborough. He focused on two areas of the bill, one being the legislation around private colleges, and a little wee bit about the Ontario College of Art & Design. I look at this bill as a bit of a house-keeping bill, where some positions are clarified. We certainly recognize the history and high standards of the Ontario College of Art & Design in allowing that great institution to become a university. The bill also talks about distance education but, here again, more clarity is

It's mainly the parts that are presently troublesome and that are not in the bill that I'm worried about, things such as: tuition fees for our students are the very highest in the country; when we look at class sizes, the class sizes in our colleges and universities have increased tremendously and, here again, are some of the highest in the country; when we look at the tenured faculty versus the faculty that just teach one class, we are short about 5,000 professors in our universities; things like student debt and the number of students who have to find employment while studying, as well as having difficulty finding employment after their studies. These are things that the government could and should act on, not to mention the funding to our colleges and universities. My colleague Rosario Marchese certainly makes a point when he says we are number 10.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I'm delighted to comment on the dissertation by my good friend the member from Peterborough. I too share the view that if he'd had a little bit more time to elaborate on this, it would have been a good thing for this House in the enlightenment of the people of Ontario.

I just want to speak a little bit about the quality of our post-secondary institutions. We have universities that are world-renowned, that are providing service and education to our students and that are first-class. I'm the father of a graduate of Queen's, a graduate of Laurier, a graduate of Laurentian and a graduate of Algoma, with some other diplomas and degrees within that context. But I understand, as most members understand, that they don't do everything. We have fine community colleges that provide good services. But there is a niche market. There are markets that we do not serve, and those would be in the private career colleges and the vocational side of things.

I was the chair of the cabinet committee on education when we dealt with this issue back in 2005. I was very proud of the bill that we put forward there, which was passed by this House, that regulated those colleges. But as with everything, there's an evolution, and some people out there who want to take advantage of our students. What this bill does is provide the opportunity to further the enforcement on those in that business who wish to take advantage of the students. While most provide great service to the people of Ontario, there are those bad actors. This provides the mechanism to further police that situation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide some comments in response to the member for Peterborough. He mentioned a community in my riding: Athens. I remember quite vividly the meeting that he spoke of earlier, where he was the parliamentary assistant and came. It was a packed house at the Joshua Bates Centre in Athens. At the time, there was a lot of concern with the government on their source water protection legislation. We had a lot of people there, some different groups. I think the landowners were there that night as well to see the parliamentary assistant. He really calmed the waters that night when he personally guaranteed the crowd that conservation authorities wouldn't go on people's property without the landowner's or the property owner's permission. He handled himself extremely well that night in Athens. I know the folks were glad that he was there and spoke and gave those assurances. I'm glad that he mentioned the good folks of Athens this morning.

When I listened to his comments about this bill—and there are a number of recommendations here—I was a little disappointed that there was one section in the preamble, subsection 2(3), entitled, "Same, diploma, etc." It reads, "For greater certainty, a diploma, certificate, document or other thing referred to in paragraph 2 of subsection (2) does not include a certificate, licence, registration or other form of official recognition that attests to the person being qualified to practise a trade or occupation," and it goes on. I guess the question that I had was, what's the motive of this? Is this going to try to put out of business many trade schools? I just don't understand who's benefiting by this subsection, so at some point I'd like the member to address that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for Peterborough has two minutes for his response.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I truly appreciate, this morning—I always find that on Thursday mornings the comments are a little more genial. I thank the members from Leeds—Grenville, Nickel Belt, Durham and my good friend and colleague from Algoma—Manitoulin. I must say to the member from Nickel Belt that a number of years ago I had the opportunity to visit Garson, Ontario, just outside of Sudbury, and had a very warm reception in that small community, just as I had the opportunity a number of years ago when I was in beautiful Athens, Ontario, in the riding of Leeds—Grenville.

It's interesting: I remember a number of years ago—people will recall the Toronto School of Business. The Toronto School of Business, I think, had associate operations in many communities throughout Ontario. They, in fact, went out of business. There was always great concern for people who got degrees or certificates of qualification from the Toronto School of Business. After they ceased operation, how much validity would those degrees or, indeed, those certificates of qualification have when one was going into the workforce with these as part of one's resumé? This bill that we are proposing will do a lot to improve the status of those quasi-degrees or certificates of qualification that will be issued by some of these private career colleges.

We're just in the initial stages of this debate. We will want to hear members from all sides of the House and, indeed, go to committee and look at amendments to make this bill the best it can be, bearing in mind that this is not a particularly partisan issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to have a few minutes to discuss Bill 43.

I think that one of the things we need to keep in mind as we have this conversation about private career colleges is the question of balance. It's interesting to note that private career colleges have existed in this province for at least 100 years. It's important to understand that with that kind of history, clearly, it's a process that has provided people with a very important option. I think the benefits of the private career college system can be boiled down to two particular elements. One is the scope, and the other is the flexibility.

Why would someone want to be involved in the process of a private career college? Well, I think scope is one of those issues, the fact that the career college can identify a niche market, an area which isn't served either geographically or more broadly, to a certain segment of the population. I think back on things like helicopter school: again, a very narrow and, I might add, a very expensive process, but nonetheless one for which there were jobs and for which there was a need. So scope is an important part of the career college's ability to find that niche and be able to provide service.

It can also, then, concentrate on a particular skill or skill set that, in the context of the public system, kind of gets lost in having many other programs and options for students. That then leads into the whole flexibility element, because very often, the private career colleges are able to compress their courses. They're able to offer them at different times of the day or the evening. That, again, allows for people who are looking for the development and the accreditation of a particular skill set to fit that into their own personal lives.

Very often, those people who are going to these private career colleges are people who have already graduated from the public system to whatever level and now need something that's very, very concentrated and specific. The point here is that they're also looking at matching

the career colleges in the position of being able to match the training with job opportunities.

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In private conversations I've had with those who offer private-college training, they tell me that in their particular niche, students are hired before they have finished the course. Another one says that industry representatives come to interview students to get, if you like, first-draft choice on the students who are there and what those students are doing that matches the industry's needs.

There's certainly a market for these institutions, but there's also a need for oversight. In my riding a few years ago, parents expressed great concern over a particular career college that was operating in my riding. They came to me. They had been to the ministry. They didn't feel that the ministry had provided the kind of oversight that was required. In this particular case, the concern was the failure rate. When a student failed, as their child had, then for an additional fee they could write again. They were concerned when they realized that this seemed to be an element that simply allowed for greater fees to be applied.

Clearly, there's a very strong case for the need for oversight. People need to be assured of the financial security of the business. They need to feel assured of the standards and the training, the presentation of appropriate curriculum. They need to know that there's public confidence in the business. They need to know that there's quality assurance and there are employment opportunities that come as a result of completing a course.

I would be the last person who would not support a recognition of the importance of regulation. Public confidence, a level playing field for people in the field of the private career colleges—and with that kind of oversight comes the confidence that legitimate business needs that kind of support. Finally, of course, people need to know that they are getting what they paid for, that they're going to get what they desire out of going.

How good is the system? I've just explained my view about how important the need for oversight is. But when you actually look at something like the Ombudsman's report of July 2009, a little less than a year ago, it's a window into a very troubled ministry.

If you look at his report, he charts the particular action taken by the ministry. There was a business, Bestech, that in November 2006 had not been registered. In fact, the ministry, in the Ombudsman's report, indicates that there are all kinds of people in that category. Despite the fact that it is illegal to operate a private career college that is not registered with the ministry, a considerable number of unregistered training facilities exist in Ontario, presenting a risk to unwary consumers. The ministry is fully cognizant of this reality. However, it does not vigorously pursue information about or enforcement against rogue operators.

I was quite startled to read that, because, as I've already pointed out, the need for oversight is absolutely critical. It is the only thing that gives stability to the legitimate operators in the field.

This particular report of the Ombudsman went on to talk about recognizing Bestech Academy in November 2006. In spite of the ministry's warning, the owner began promoting Bestech Academy and enrolling students without the ministry's knowledge.

"In April 2007, the ministry became aware that Bestech Academy was providing illegal fuels industry training at its Stoney Creek campus." This is the key to the point I made a moment ago about the need for oversight, the need for public confidence. "Instead of trying to shut down Bestech Academy to protect student consumers, as a result of confusion and miscommunication, the ministry proceeded to support the school through the Ontario skills development program. In the end, the province spent upwards of \$60,000, a substantial amount of which represented tuition fees, to send seven mature students for retraining at Bestech Academy." This is a place that's illegal, that isn't providing the appropriate kind of service.

"It wasn't until March 2008"—remember, I said that this began in November 2006—"that, as a broader initiative targeted at illegal providers of gas technician programs, the ministry actually issued Bestech a formal warning that its continuing operation could compromise future registration and lead to penalties under the act.... In June 2008, the ministry finally issued a restraining order against the school....

"In August 2008, ministry site visits disclosed that 174 students had attended Bestech Academy...." That's why I pointed out that the dates are important, because this

process began in 2006.

"Given Bestech Academy's history of operating illegally despite repeated warnings, its failure to follow through on undertakings, the incompetence apparent in its registration application as well as the fact that it had misled the ministry on multiple occasions, it seems virtually inconceivable that the company could have satisfied the compliance and integrity standards for registration." However, the ministry decided to give Bestech Academy yet another chance to see the error of its ways. We're now up to September 2008. At that point, the ministry gave it until October 2008.

This chronology, I think, demonstrates the fact that the ministry has not done a good job. Well, "good" is hardly even relevant here. It took two years before something

happened in terms of closing the door.

"It is obvious," the Ombudsman goes on to say, "that there is much more that the ministry can do to publicize its knowledge of illegal operators, who are placing the public at risk."

The other interesting thing is that by November 2008, the president of Bestech was hired by the ministry.

So how good is the system? I think the report demon-

strates a staggering incompetence.

Is the bill the answer? Significant parts of the bill seem to tighten up parts of the process, and I would take you to areas such as section 17 with regard to the ministry's ability to make approvals of a specific program. But this also deals with those who are already registered,

that they would then have to reapply. The bill gives no indication under what conditions and how much this has to do with the power of the superintendent or his delegated authority. There is no consideration given to the cost of compliance or the frequency with which one might have to reapply; there is nothing in regard to the process of third party approvals.

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That leads me to think that what this bill seems to do is create yet another dilemma. Obviously, there are parts of the report that, I would argue, seem to be driven by issues raised by the Ombudsman's report, but clearly, we have to have public hearings. We need to ensure that the amendments to this act are serving the public good. We're not here as legislators to drive legitimate business out of the province; we are here to provide proper information to prospective students and to protect the public—both students and taxpayers—from rogue colleges.

Going back to a theme I mentioned a moment ago, there's the need to provide some kind of balance. This bill appears to be far more punitive of the legitimate providers than of private career colleges. I don't see as much as I would like to see about the question of the rogue operators and the fact that the ministry was prepared to drag on for two years against one particular offender and is able to say to the Ombudsman that they know there are many more illegitimate rogue providers.

This is an issue of consumer confidence. It's an issue for the legitimate businesses who want to provide that flexibility and scope that I began with. I think that it behooves the government at this point in the process that we have fulsome public hearings. We have to hear from those providers.

Certainly, there are many issues, and I note the one recognized earlier in the week; the Globe and Mail talked about the issue of repayment. You can't cast a net that is so broad it damages the reputation of legitimate businesses. One of the providers, for instance—the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College in Toronto—has loan repayment rates that surpass most public institutions.

My concern about this bill is that it doesn't demonstrate the government's commitment to ensuring a vibrant, healthy and appropriate private college system in this province by having those protections for the private providers and being vigorous in its pursuit of the rogue ones. That's what we need as legislators. That's what we need to be able to stand up and say we did for Ontario, for Ontario students and for the "oops" plan, the Open Ontario plan, that's going to have all these people coming from all over the world.

We have to ensure that we have the security and safety and future of this system to provide for the generations of Canadians that need that flexibility and that scope of specialization that career colleges have provided in this province for 100 years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments? The honourable member from Ancaster–Flamborough–Westdale and something else. Sorry.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I always say it's the riding with the longest name because our people have the biggest hearts, the biggest hopes and the biggest dreams. One of those hopes and dreams is that our government will continue to pursue excellence in post-secondary education.

Picking up on the speaker opposite, we'll do all in our power to build the vibrant, healthy and appropriate climate where people can come to both our public institutions and those that meet the smell test in terms of private career colleges and acquire the skills and tools they need to make a contribution to building an even stronger country.

It is about consumer confidence, and I know I've had many conversations with my esteemed colleague from Hamilton Mountain, the Minister of Consumer Services, who shares my concern that students ought not to be

buying a pig in a poke.

I think it appropriate to point out here one of the ironies of the previous speaker's comments. You can isolate an example and beat up on one particular situation. We'd be pleased to join you in that—we recognize that things aren't perfect; that's why this legislation is here to try to make things better—but then to go on and to say, "We need to have confidence in the sector." That's exactly what this bill is about. It's about building confidence. It's about assuring quality. It's about making sure that when people sign up for a program that they think will allow them to acquire the skills and the training that they need to make a contribution, they're getting real value for that investment. Our government is absolutely committed to that, and that's all this legislation is about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide some comments in response to my colleague from York-Simcoe. I think she hit the nail on the head in many respects with the concerns on this piece of legislation.

I've had the opportunity to peruse the Ombudsman's report of July 2009, expressing many of the concerns that the member for York-Simcoe talked about: that this government was asleep at the switch in terms of bringing amendments forward. The Ombudsman called the ministry a number of things: inept, that the situation was a disaster. The example that the member for York-Simcoe talked about, that one side of the ministry was investigating that college and the other side was giving it money, is a tremendous embarrassment for this government—to be able to see in an Ombudsman's report that you're investigating someone and also giving them cash.

It's just mind-boggling, the fact that this bill seeks to expand the powers of the government to oversee career colleges and private universities yet they haven't used the tools that are available to them right now. The question becomes: If you're not dealing with what you've got now, how are you able to expand the powers?

Again, the member for York-Simcoe talked about public hearings on this and the fact that we have to hear from providers on the issue of ensuring that we have a vibrant and healthy private college system. I think she has made some extremely good comments, and I hope, during the debate, that the government will address those comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I, too, listened to the member from York-Simcoe and was rather interested. She went through an example that showed clearly that the government was in a position to act, and had the opportunity and all of the levers available to do something, but chose not to. She was very eloquent in the way that she described the important roles that the hundreds of private colleges play in Ontario. There is a role for the private college, and she described it in quite some detail. She showed some of the good that comes from having those colleges available to the people of Ontario and some of the successes that come from it. But then, when it came to areas going really wrong, to the point where it was brought to the attention of the government—the government knew about it, and not only did they decide to do nothing, they continued to invest.

It's really sending a double message, and I sort of agree with her that if this piece of legislation is not brought to committee and really some amendments are not made to make it clearer, then those kinds of abnormalities could happen again the way that the bill is written now. There are lots of important issues that need to be talked about when we talk about colleges and universities. I've mentioned some of them—the student debt. I would say that funding for the college and university system has to be addressed; I would say that some of the challenges faced by aboriginal and francophone students have to be addressed also.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments? Seeing none, the honourable member for York—Simcoe has up to two minutes for her response.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I do appreciate the comments that were made. I think there is agreement here among those who spoke about the importance of what we often refer to as simply getting it right. I think that there are people whose needs have to be recognized. I recognize by the comments made by the member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale the fact that you do need to look at this as part of a bigger picture. But I think that the most important thing about this is the need for public hearings and the need to hear from providers and have a fuller understanding of some of the issues that have been brought forward by debate.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): It being well past 10:15, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we'll have question period.

The House recessed from 1022 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to welcome all the television and media cameras that are here today, and I trust members are on their best behaviour.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: On behalf of the member from Sarnia-Lambton, I'd like to welcome Don Pitt from the

Family Counselling Centre in Sarnia. He's here today to participate in family services day at Queen's Park. We'd like to welcome Don to the Legislature today.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Indeed, this is family services day in the Legislature. We have three representatives here from Thunder Bay: Nancy Chamberlain, executive director of the Thunder Bay Counselling Centre—welcome, Nancy; Abi Sprakes, manager of programs and services at the Thunder Bay Counselling Centre; and Carol Cline, program manager from the Catholic Family Development Centre. Welcome. If I missed anybody, you're all welcome.

Mr. Jim Brownell: I'd like to introduce Raymond Houde, executive director of Counselling and Support Services of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry; and Alex MacDougall, the past president of the same organization. He is presently vice-president of the board of directors of Family Service Ontario. I'd like to welcome them.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'd like to introduce Peter Prior from the Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin. Welcome to Oueen's Park.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm pleased to welcome to the chamber Ms. Linda Dayler, executive director, and representatives from Catholic Family Services of Hamilton, which is located in my riding and does outstanding work in our city.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'd like to add my welcomes and welcome Alan McQuarrie, who is the executive director of the community care access centre, and his chair, Derek Thompson, who is with him here today. We're delighted, and we appreciate all the work you're doing in Nipissing. Thank you.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like to introduce John Ellis, who is the executive director of Family Service Ontario. He is in the gallery with Bobbye Goldenberg, the president of the board of directors of Family Service Ontario. I would like to invite all MPPs to their luncheon reception in room 228 following question period today.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to recognize members of the Durham Catholic family services from Durham region who are here today.

Hon. John Milloy: We have a big delegation down here at Queen's Park from Waterloo region today. Many of them are here with us from K-W Counselling Services: Leslie Josling, Cindy Jacobsen and Paula DeLorenzi; and from Mosaic Counselling and Family Services: Megan Conway, Cath Done, Anne Mank, Mary Wells, Shelley Norton, Scott Witmer, Tanya Smith and Patricia Beardsley.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Just subsequent to the minister and his introduction, I just would like to draw special attention—we're really thrilled that the people from Kitchener—Waterloo are here, but one of the people who is here today is my son, Scott Witmer.

Mr. Charles Sousa: I would like to welcome to the members' gallery Mr. Dave Cook and his wife, Sophie. Mr. Cook is a former Mississauga city councillor, a writer and a historian. I'm pleased to recognize and celebrate his latest book, titled Fading History, Vol. 2, profiling

celebrity leaders in Mississauga. His previously published books about Mississauga's history include Fading History, a collection of 15 stories about Mississauga's heritage; Apple Blossoms & Satellite Dishes, which captures the wonderful history of the Applewood community; and From Frozen Ponds to Beehive Glory, which records the magic of Dixie Arena and the Beehive hockey club. Congratulations, Dave, and welcome back to Oueen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Barrie.

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm so surprised you finally saw me. Thank you so much.

I'm delighted to introduce Heather Bebb, who is visiting us today with other members of the Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County. She is the executive director in Simcoe county, and it is a great delight to have her here.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: On behalf of all the Peel members, I'd like to welcome the board members of the Catholic Family Services of Peel-Dufferin: Ehsan Khandaker, Jose Diaz, Peter Prior, Jim Leising, Andrea Broadley and executive director of Catholic family services Mark Creedon, who are all here for family services day at Queen's Park. Welcome. Great to have you here.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I'm delighted to introduce in the House with us today Joyce Zuk—and John Ellis, of course, who's the president for Ontario. Both of these folks are from Windsor and Essex county family services. We're delighted they're joining us today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: No, you got me already.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: That's not the first time that's happened.

I've been asked to introduce Keith and Gail Haynes, Peter Haynes, Eileen Risby and David Coope, who are here from Texas and England—interesting combination.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I don't want to let the day pass without welcoming Family Service Thames Valley to the Legislature. They do great work. Welcome.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park Margaret Werkhoven, chair of the board of directors for Loyalist College, and Maureen Piercy, president of Loyalist College. Welcome.

Mr. David Zimmer: I would like to introduce Catholic Family Services of Toronto. They're headquartered in Willowdale, right next to my constituency office. They're here for family services day. Virginia Koehler and Roz Boateng, welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Kim Craitor: I'm pleased to introduce a very good friend of mine, Kim Stasiak; she has a great first name. She is nursing in Newfoundland, and she flew in today because she heard that we are a very civil House. She is also a former nurse in Ontario. She was on the executive of the Ontario Nurses' Association, she was on the Ontario Health Coalition and she was on the Niagara

Health Coalition. Most importantly, she is one of my best friends.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'd like to introduce guests who are here in the chamber at Queen's Park. Jane Ishibashi, president; Wayne Shantz, executive director; and Doug Myrden: all members of Halton Family Services. Welcome today to the Ontario Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome, seated in the Speaker's gallery today from Family Service Thames Valley, executive director Sandra Savage and past president Alex Connoy. Welcome. And for anybody who wasn't welcomed today, welcome to Queen's Park.

There being no further introductions—*Interruption*.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Remove the items. 1040

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Members of the Legislature are very understanding of the rules, and they understand that props are not allowed. I'm disturbed at the incident that has just taken place because it's obvious it was planned by the number of media cameras that are here in both galleries. I don't think this chamber should be used in any way for any stunts.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Women across Canada refuse to be silenced about abortion or any other issue that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That is not a point of order. All members of this Legislature are very aware of the rules and that we have available for members the media studio and the grounds. But this chamber is to be used to conduct the business of the province.

It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, I can assure you of one thing: This is one woman who will never be silenced by this Liberal government.

I'm going to say that, later today, MPPs from all political parties will have an opportunity to vote for truth—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Who's the question to?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: To the Premier, Mr. Speaker. I was so excited.

MPPs from all political parties will have an opportunity to vote for truth in government. They can support my private member's bill that I'm bringing forward on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus.

My private member's bill contains a series of taxpayer protection measures which will include expanding freedom of information across all the public sector and ensuring full proactive disclosure of hospitality expenses, job reclassifications and contracts and contributions over \$10,000 to public bodies.

BC and Alberta are already doing it. Ontario is not covered by FOI. Is that so Ontario families will not be able to see the money—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I welcome my honourable colleague's newfound enthusiasm for transparency and accountability. I look forward to the debate of her private member's bill, and I congratulate her for bringing that forward.

But I would wonder, on behalf of the government and on behalf of Ontarians, why it is that when we moved to expand the sunshine list to include OPG and Hydro One, their party opposed that. Why is it that when we ask the Auditor General to expand his role to value-for-money audits of broader public sector hospitals, universities and schools, they opposed that as well? There are a number of other things which we've moved forward on, and in every instance, they've opposed that transparency and accountability.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: He can continue to look in the past, but the Ontario PC caucus, under the leadership of Tim Hudak, will continue to look forward and call for accountability.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner has repeatedly called to expand freedom of information to hospitals. So has the Ontario Hospital Association itself. But Dalton McGuinty is ignoring them, and he's ignoring us. Meanwhile, he's letting Liberal-friendly consultants who get rich off eHealth contracts feed off the trough.

Courtyard's website shows that they have been doing work for the University Health Network and Kingston General Hospital. News releases and resumés of those who work for Courtyard show that they were cozy with three hospitals. Why would the Premier be opposed to centralizing information about these deals online and making them subject to FOIs?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to repeat what I said a moment ago. When we asked the Auditor General to expand his role to value-for-money audits to cover public sector institutions like hospitals, that party opposed that. I also want to say that when we moved with respect to expenses and tightening rules for travel and meals and required that the Integrity Commissioner now review expenses of our 22 largest agencies, again that party opposed that new measure of openness, accountability and transparency.

Again, I congratulate the member on the private member's bill she's bringing forward. I'm sure all members look forward to that debate. But I would ask them that the next time we move forward with measures for accountability and transparency, we have their support.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I expect the Premier and his caucus to support the Truth in Government Act this afternoon. Sudbury hospital admits that it has a contract to pay McKinsey for advice on health care cuts, but the Premier won't release it. The McGuinty Liberals signed at least 40 contracts with American hospitals and clinics to make them "preferred providers of US health care for Ontario patients," but the Premier won't table those reports either. Courtyard, Accenture and Blue Pebble, all implicated in the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle, supplied consultants to the UHN, and the health budget is a lot more than a billion dollars.

So I ask: Will you let Ontario families watch over their health care dollars by adopting our proposals today?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: On the matter of health care, I would have Ontarians understand that the official opposition said, in terms of funding levels, they would have ensured that program funding would increase only at the rate of inflation. Since 2003, that would have been a \$10-billion cut from front-line health care in the province of Ontario, just so people are clear as to where that party is coming from.

One more thing: With respect to freedom of information, we've expanded FOI requests to cover OPG, Hydro One, universities, and agencies like Cancer Care Ontario. Again, in every instance where we've moved forward with accountability and transparency measures, we have been opposed every step along the way by the party

opposite.

PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question goes back to the Premier. Unfortunately, he is not adopting any of our

proposals, from the way he's speaking today.

The auditor is investigating 16 hospitals for use of consultants, procurements and expenses, so I have a question for the Premier. It's very simple. How many contracts will the auditor find that were handed out to the Premier's former political staff, election campaign organizers and friends of the McGuinty Liberals?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think this is, sadly, par for the course when it comes to the official opposition. The Auditor General is conducting his work, as always, with the highest level of integrity, commitment and thoroughness. We welcome that and we encourage that, and anything we might do to support that, obviously, we are

prepared to do.

Again, I want to come back to the original argument that I continue to make here. In every instance where we have tried to move ahead with new measures that promote accountability, transparency and further government openness, we have been opposed every step of the way by the party opposite. I would again say that the next time we want to move forward in those directions, I would ask them for their support.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Today is the opportunity to move forward by putting forward this private member's bill

and voting for it to restore truth in government. He can do it. It's easy and it can be done today. Everyone but the McGuinty Liberals understand that the practices of the past need to change. The auditor discovered some eyebrow-raising consulting contracts and expenses at eHealth. There is every reason to believe he will find more of the same at the hospitals, or his report would have been tabled by now.

If the accountability reforms I am proposing were adopted, contracts over \$10,000 would be posted online so Ontario families could track the Dalton McGuinty sweetheart deals to consultants at the Windsor Energy Centre or even at Casino Niagara.

So I've got a question for the Premier: Will he at least disclose the value of the untendered contracts that he

handed out at Casino Niagara?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague, sadly for her—and I feel for her in this regard—missed the good old days. It would have been great to have had her with us in opposition dealing with the Conservative government of the day and all of the challenges they

created for Ontario taxpayers.

Again, whether we're talking about expanding the sunshine list or expanding the role we've given the Auditor General to look into different public institutions, whether we're talking about the rules we've put in place regarding expenses or whether we're talking about publicly posting expenses and making that mandatory, in all of those areas we have found a way, as a government, to make progress in Ontario. We have changed Conservative government rules. We considered them inadequate. We found them wanting. We've improved upon those, and in each and every instance we did that, we were opposed by the party opposite.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supple-

mentary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: This is actually quite laughable. Don't cry for me. It's you who is out of touch and out of gas. Your Liberals will not answer direct questions about how they spend taxpayer dollars.

1050

If the Truth in Government Act and its accountability measures were adopted today, Ontario families would have at their fingertips the value of contracts over \$10,000. With Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC's plan, Ontario families will get proactive disclosure, greater accountability and truth in government. The alternative Dalton McGuinty offers is secret sweetheart deals for Casino Niagara, Samsung, consultants at the LHINs and the UHN, the Sudbury hospital, the Kingston General Hospital, 16 hospitals the auditor is reviewing and who knows where else?

Why are you so obviously trying to avoid letting anyone know who is getting rich off your contracts that you're handing out? Will you ensure that your caucus votes to support our—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: A lot of energy, a lot of heat; not a lot of light, sadly. I always appreciate the

enthusiasm, the vigour and the vitality demonstrated by my colleague opposite, but we will continue to do what we believe is in the best interests of the people of Ontario. We will hold ourselves to the highest standards of accountability, transparency and openness. We will continue to find ways to ensure that the public dollar goes as far as possible. We'll continue to find ways to make sure that Ontario taxpayers get good value for their money, whether we're investing it in their hospitals, investing in their schools, investing in their roads, bridges, public transit or their environmental protections. I want to assure my colleague opposite that we take this responsibility very seriously.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. The NDP study using Statistics Canada's number-crunching skills shows that Ontario families will be paying a lot more under the McGuinty government's unfair tax plan. If the Premier is so confident about his HST scheme, why won't he release his estimates about how much the HST will really cost Ontario families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: As my honourable colleague well knows, at the time of our budget and through our presentations, we had put out there for some time now our estimates, our calculations with respect to the HST and its impact on families. I refer my colleague to some of the documentation that has been out for quite some time

Again, I think the best thing for Ontarians to do is to take a look at those two independent studies. I think that we can have the highest confidence, if we're looking for non-partisanship here, in those independent studies. One is from the University of Calgary by Professor Jack Mintz; the other is from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. I would strongly recommend those to my colleague opposite, and I look forward to describing in some detail the contents of those in my supplementary responses.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Because the Premier is still refusing to tell the real story, we released more figures today about just how much Ontario families will pay in new taxes. The average couple with one child will pay \$1,239 more in taxes and are a shocking \$815 a year worse off even after the government's so-called help.

When was the Premier planning to tell families with children that the HST was going to cost them more than \$1,200 each and every year?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I bring this healthy scepticism towards NDP math, and maybe it's because I've seen a lot of NDP math over the years.

Instead, I'm going to make reference to this study put out by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. They call their study Not a Tax Grab After All: A Second Look at Ontario's HST, and I'll quote one passage from this. It reads: "Families in a wide range of incomes (\$30,000-\$90,000) should be better off on average by less than \$80

or worse off by less than \$65 per year." That is a marked difference from the numbers put forward by my honourable colleague.

This is from a separate, independent, third party source. I would again recommend to Ontarians that they look at the reports by the independent parties.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Life with the HST won't be any better for parents with two or more children either. They'll be paying an extra \$1,321 a year in sales taxes and \$830 more after the tax cuts and credits. If the Premier has a different set of numbers, if he actually has a different set of numbers, where are they? Why will he not simply release them to the public so that they can see for themselves?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm not sure that my colleague is open to an enlightened understanding of the information that is out there. But what I can say is that the people in her community and the people around Ontario are very focused on one number in particular: 600,000. That's the number of jobs that our package of tax reforms is going to create over the course of the next 10 years.

My honourable colleague says she's very concerned on behalf of Ontario families. I think the single most important and pressing issue before Ontario families today, in the aftermath of this terrible recession where we lost 250,000 jobs, is: What about more jobs for the future? Our package of tax reforms is designed to create 600,000 more jobs for the people of Ontario over the course of the next 10 years, and we're very proud of moving ahead with that.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier as well. We've submitted freedom-of-information requests looking for the government's own estimates—the government's own estimates—on the impact of the Liberals' new tax on families. The government has the numbers, but these requests have been blocked at every single turn. Why is the Premier so afraid to tell Ontario families how much more they're going to be paying thanks to the HST?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'll give a copy of this book to my honourable colleague. It has been out for about six months now. It's put out by the Ministry of Finance. It's called Ontario's Tax Plan for Jobs and Growth: Cutting Personal and Corporate Taxes and Harmonizing Sales Taxes. I'll make reference to numbers that are found on pages 24 and 25 of this little manual. It says that a single parent on Ontario Works with two kids aged 5 and 7 will, after full implementation of this tax plan, benefit to the tune of \$585. That's how much they'll be ahead. A single senior, pension income \$20,000, will be ahead by \$105. A single individual earning \$30,000 will be ahead by \$255. A couple earning \$70,000 with two kids, ages 5 and 10, will be ahead by \$365. This takes into account all

of our tax measures, and I recommend this to my honourable colleague.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: One day the Premier says that the tax is going to hit families and the next day he says it isn't. Nobody really knows because they won't come clean with the numbers. We know very well that this tax is going to hit families and it's going to hit them hard.

Yesterday in Sudbury, city council announced that they'll be raising fees to cope with the cost of the McGuinty government's unfair tax. In Sudbury and everywhere else across Ontario it's going to cost more to enrol babies in swim class; it's going to be more to take a fitness class at a rec centre; it's going to be more to rent ice for a hockey game. When will the Premier release all the details that the government has about the real cost of the harmonized sales tax?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We've done all that; it's just that she doesn't agree with the numbers. It's as simple as that. I think it's also important to keep in mind that 83% of consumer purchases will remain unaffected by our tax changes. Let me give you an example of some of the things which remain unaffected: groceries, prescription drugs, your water bill, public transit, child care services, books, children's clothing, children's footwear, adult clothing, child car seats, cars, car repairs, lawnmowers, refrigerators, freezers, computers, furniture, toys, admission to sporting events, movie tickets, restaurant meals, cellphone charges, home phone services, cable TV services, auto insurance, home insurance, rent, newspapers, radios, accessories, TVs, DVDs. All of these things will remain unchanged.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier's unfair tax will take \$800 out of every single average family's pocket. That is the fact. It will be much more for families with kids. The cost of heating your home, buying a bike, even taking your child to a swim class is going to be going up. If the Premier really believes that his new tax is the right thing to do, why is he refusing to tell families the basic facts like exactly how much it will cost them each and every year with the harmonized sales tax?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We've had our numbers out for a long time. There have been independent numbers out for a long time, and my honourable colleague and her party have come up with an interesting interpretation, if I may say, of reality when it comes to the numbers.

But I do want to remind my honourable colleague that the NDP Fair Tax Commission, established in 1991—I'd been sitting in the Legislature for one year at that time, and I recall very well the work of the NDP Fair Tax Commission—came forward with recommendation 58, which specifically said that Ontario should exempt all business inputs from the retail sales tax. That means the HST; it's a value-added tax we're talking about, the HST. This is the same party that, in government, stood for the HST, and it's interesting that now that they find them-

selves in opposition, they stand counter to a program which they know will increase jobs for working families.

1100

SEVERANCE PAYMENTS

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a question for the Premier. With just 56 days left before the HST comes into full force, Ontario families are still being surprised by new details about your tax grab.

This morning at the committee reviewing the budget, we learned that it is not the collective agreements that are making you pay severance to the Ministry of Revenue staff who will transfer offices without missing a day of work. Premier, you could have used the HST agreement with Ottawa to clarify what everyone knows—that these employees are not dismissed—and saved \$25 million for Ontario families.

Why did you say your hands were tied by the collective agreements when they weren't?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Just so we know what we are talking about here, the HST severance pay was in keeping with an obligation that we have. The Conservative government inserted that clause in the collective agreement that guarantees severance. They had a chance to change it in 1999; they did not. They had a chance to change it in 2002; they refused to do it then. We did change it, for new hires. That's how you change these things: on a go-forward basis. New hires are no longer entitled to this kind of severance. That started January 2009. So, in fact, we were committed to an undertaking given by the previous government. We believe we have a responsibility to honour that kind of an undertaking, and we did that.

More importantly, this new transformation will save \$100 million every year on an ongoing basis for the taxpayers of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Norm Miller: You signed the CITCA agreement with the federal government. You, sir, signed that agreement. What the Premier says about having to pay severance to people who were not dismissed and will not miss a day of work is as forthright as what he said about the HST being revenue-neutral.

The Ontario PCs proposed to amend the definition of "dismissal" without touching the collective agreements of HST tax collectors, but the McGuinty Liberals blocked us from standing up for Ontario families who cannot understand why the Premier is paying severance packages when no one is being severed from their job.

With just 56 days left, what will Ontario families discover is the next McGuinty Liberal HST fib?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask the honourable member to withdraw that last comment.

Mr. Norm Miller: Withdraw. "Surprise."

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No, an unequivocal withdrawal.

Mr. Norm Miller: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to remind my honourable colleague, because he didn't have the benefit of being here then, that in 1996, when there were jobs transferred from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to the University of Guelph, again, people still had a job, but they also got severance under the Conservatives. That was in keeping with an agreement that the government had entered into. In 1997, when jobs were transferred from the Ministry of Health to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, again under the Conservatives, people kept their jobs, but severance payments were also made.

We're doing what is fair in the circumstances. We've changed it on a go-forward basis. We're honouring an agreement that that government entered into. We feel some sense of responsibility when it comes to honouring agreements. My honourable colleagues opposite may feel differently when it comes to collective bargaining, but we see things differently.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. This morning, Toronto commuters were rightly worried that the full Transit City expansion promised by this government will never be built. But on Tuesday, the Premier told his House, "The four Transit City projects"—Sheppard, Eglinton, Finch and Scarborough—"can reasonably be completed in 10 years, while achieving the required savings of \$4 billion."

Will the Premier confirm that this is still the case, that all four lines will be built in their entirety and operational by 2020, despite his government's \$4-billion cut?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the member opposite is referring perhaps to a letter that was sent by the mayor to the government expressing a lack of support for the process that's going on. The problem is that we really need the TTC, and we need the mayor to be working with Metrolinx.

We are determined that these projects are going to go ahead. There are actually five projects—there's a fifth project that goes up into York region—and the money for those projects is in place. We're developing the plan. It's really disappointing, I think, that the mayor doesn't want to get onboard, work with us and make sure that the projects go ahead. That's what we need.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier keeps saying that his government is committed to completing Transit City and that the funding is only being delayed. But today, a new Metrolinx plan has been made public showing that Metrolinx plans to cut Transit City lines by 22.5 kilometres and remove 25 stops.

Did the Premier already know that Metrolinx was cutting Transit City lines by about one third when he told this House that Transit City would be "completed in 10 years"? And if he did know, why didn't he say so then?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let's be clear: We're talking about—just for the Toronto projects, because the mayor is only talking about those four projects—\$8.1 billion. That money remains in place. That is the money that we have committed to.

Yes, there had been a conversation before the budget was announced about exactly how those projects would roll out. The mayor was part of that conversation, and he agreed to the initial conversation on how those projects would be rolled out. We brought the budget in and we said that we had to delay the cash flow, but the reality is that this is completely provincial money that's going to these projects. These are not municipal dollars. The mayor needs to understand, I believe, that if he can work with us, these projects can go ahead. If not, the projects are at risk, and that would be a great shame for the city of Toronto and for the people who live in Toronto.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Our province, like many jurisdictions around the world, is just now starting to emerge from one of the worst economic downturns of our lifetime. As a result of this downturn, a number of key industries were negatively affected and jobs were lost. Ontario's auto industry was no exception. As this sector crumbled around the world, the negative effects were felt here at home. Auto companies scrambled to downsize, cut costs and restructure to remain afloat, and production levels fell. This left thousands of Ontario auto jobs in limbo, and many were lost.

The fog of the most recent recession appears to be lifting, though, and a number of sectors in the province are beginning to bounce back. It's for this reason that I ask the minister: What's the current status of the auto industry in Ontario following one of the most devastating recessions of our lifetime?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I'm delighted to speak about an industry that is dear to the heart of this economy in Ontario and, of course, to members all over this House, but in particular this member from Pickering, whose whole riding is certainly reliant on a thriving automotive sector as well.

We're very pleased that the Ontario government stepped forward when we did. When that sector needed the help, the Ontario government was there. We knew that it had a future, and today we are seeing signs that that investment, that partnership, with the automotive sector was a very sound decision. Today, we're seeing companies rehiring people and bringing back people from layoff. In Woodstock, as you know, they're adding an additional shift with Toyota. If you go down to Chrysler, the van plant, they are firing on three shifts and overtime. At the CAMI plant in Ingersoll, we are looking at rehires as well. These are signs that this sector is starting to fire on all cylinders.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?
Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I want to thank the minister for her answer. It's encouraging to see that things in the auto

sector are turning around, not just globally but also here at home. These announcements of increased production, sales and new or recalled jobs are particularly encouraging. For this reason, I'd like to congratulate those auto companies on their recent announcements.

At the height of this recession, the government provided a lifeline to a number of key auto companies in the province, and one of those companies was General Motors, which was mentioned by the minister during her initial answer. In light of this government's support for General Motors, I want to ask the minister: What's the current status of General Motors in the province of Ontario?

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Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think all of us here in the House, none more so than our Minister of Finance, are delighted to see the repayment of their loan five years ahead of schedule. This was very good news for General Motors and very good news for the people of Ontario. We were delighted to see that they have made yet another investment in the St. Catharines plant with their V8 product. We are delighted because that speaks to the future of GM's footprint here in Ontario, not just in production but in new products as well.

In the CAMI plant in Ingersoll, they are hiring more people and adding an additional shift. This is all really great news for GM. GM, by itself, accounts for at least a third of all of the products in the automotive supply chain as well, so it's not just important to GM; it's important to the whole supply chain and, frankly, to all of us here in Ontario.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Minister of Energy. I recently asked the minister a question about the contract for the multi-million-dollar redevelopment of 400-series service centres. I asked him to disclose the amount of payment that was made to the losing bidder for that contract. I recently received a letter from him, but we're still no closer to the truth.

The minister states in his letter that the payment was made pursuant to a design and bid fee for unsuccessful bidders and claims that this is standard business practice. The minister must also know then that it's also standard business practice to disclose that payment.

Can the minister tell us why, in this case, the amount of the so-called bid fee paid to Carillion Canada is being withheld? What is it about—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I thank the member for the question. What the member is talking about, for those who aren't sure, is a project that is developing 20 service centres across our highways, modernizing rest areas and creating accessible and improved food services while creating 2,000 to 2,500 service centre jobs. I know the member is aware of this; it is an important project, and we are very pleased to be moving forward with it.

As I've said to the member in the past, the design bid fee is not an unusual industry practice. It's something that promotes good business practices between government and the business community. It's something that's important to ensure, in a province that's open for doing business, that we have a good working relationship.

We'll continue, and I certainly am open to working with the member to get further answers to his questions. We did respond earlier—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: I'm well familiar with the design and bid fee and its purpose. What is surprising, though, is that we have it on good authority that the amount paid to Carillion Canada far exceeds what would typically be paid as a design and bid fee.

What is also surprising, for a government that purports to be open and wants to disclose its bidding information, is that in this particular case this fee continues to be undisclosed.

Why will the minister not disclose the amount of this fee to this Legislature and to the people of Ontario, who have paid for that bid fee? Will the minister undertake to disclose to us the reason for the fee and the amount? That's all we're asking.

Hon. Brad Duguid: One of the reasons why Infrastructure Ontario was set up was to professionalize—

Mr. John Yakabuski: What are you hiding?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew will please withdraw the comment.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdrawn, unequivocally.

Hon. Brad Duguid: One of the reasons why Infrastructure Ontario was set up was to professionalize the procurement process for many of these contracts that go out. That's the job that they do. In fact, in this particular case, an independent fairness adviser oversaw the entire procurement process and determined indeed that the process was open, fair and transparent. I think that what Ontarians want is that kind of open and transparent process.

We are looking forward—in fact, we've invited the member to sit down and have a briefing on this issue. If some of the questions he is asking can't be answered in that briefing, that's fine. There is sometimes commercially sensitive information that can't be—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

PENSION REFORM

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. On June 13 and 14, finance ministers from across Canada will be gathering in PEI to decide upon the future of retirement savings in this country. A report suggests that later today, a Liberal member from Peterborough will introduce a private member's bill that bears a close resemblance to a proposal put forward by the insurance industry. The finance minister is quoted as saying that the government may very well pass it.

We in the NDP have come down firmly on the side of public, defined pension plans with our well-received Ontario retirement plan. It's a very simple question, Premier. Which side are you on: the side of the banks and insurance companies or the people of Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to again commend my colleague opposite and his party as well for the proposal that they've put forward. We think that it will likely form an important aspect of any ultimate solution that deals with the looming challenge of inadequate retirement benefits. We will continue to find ways to work with the federal government and with my counterparts across the country to determine what it is that we can do collectively. I've always said that it's a national challenge that requires a national response. Again, I commend the NDP for the proposal that they have put forward, but I think it's going to take more than that.

I think the other thing that I would say to my colleague opposite is that it's going to require that they also attach the cost associated with the proposal so that we can get a better sense of what we're talking about there.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?
Mr. Paul Miller: I think we did attach costs, if you read the report.

The respected pension expert Keith Ambachtsheer has said publicly that defined benefit plans can deliver the same level of retirement income at almost half the cost of retirement schemes offered by banks and insurance companies. In the historic pension debate that is now taking place, you either believe in cost-effective public pensions, as we do in the New Democratic Party, or you support the banks and insurance companies and their expensive individual savings plans. Premier, whose side are you on?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to say a few things in this regard. First of all, the Minister of Finance is in Ottawa today attending a round table on pensions. Secondly, I want to thank my honourable colleague and his party for supporting the pension bill that was passed just yesterday in this very Legislature. Thirdly, I just don't think we enjoy the luxury of seeing the world the way my honourable colleagues in the NDP do, which is that either you are with me or against me, or you're on this side or you're on that side. I think the world is more complicated, and I think there's room, ultimately, in the solution when it comes to dealing with our pensions for some greater public initiative. I think it's also important for us to find ways to create more private opportunities for Ontario families as well, should they wish to avail themselves of that kind of an opportunity.

So again, we're going to try to bring a comprehensive, holistic, thoughtful approach to a tremendous challenge. We'll continue to find ways to work with our colleagues opposite, with the federal government and with my counterparts from around the country.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. In my riding of York South-Weston,

transit is a top priority. My constituents are eagerly awaiting the completion of the big five transit projects, particularly the Eglinton LRT. The delay in funding for the transit projects in the GTA, as announced in the budget, however, has caused mixed reactions. While some of my constituents believe themselves to be well served by the delay, as it permits additional reflection and analysis of the Eglinton LRT in regard to safety, expropriations, revitalization and the development of the Kodak lands, they are all worried that they may not see the construction of these transit lines for a very long time.

Would the minister confirm where we're at? It needs to be fully understood what the government's plan is.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you to the member for the question. Let me begin by saying that I understand as the Minister of Transportation, but I also understand as an MPP from Toronto how important these projects are. We've made a commitment to build regional transit in Toronto and the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, and we're moving forward. We've made significant investments in public transit already: \$9.3 billion since 2003.

I've asked the experts at Metrolinx to come forward with a thoughtful, reasonable plan for phasing the big five transit projects, so that's the four Toronto projects and the York project. I look forward to seeing that plan later this month.

Let me be clear: I want to remind all of our Toronto and GTHA constituents that this money in these projects, apart from a small amount of federal money in the Sheppard project, is all provincial. There is no municipal funding. We are going to move ahead, and I look forward to the co-operation of the mayor with us.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Minister, notwithstanding the mixed reactions in my community to the Eglinton LRT project as it stands, this morning I was alarmed to hear stories in the media reporting that the mayor of Toronto will not support Metrolinx's plan to complete the big five projects in 10 years. Many of my constituents will be wondering whether this is the end of the next generation of public transit in the GTA. There are petitions being signed and emails being sent—a lot of fear-mongering. As I mentioned, transit is a priority in my riding.

We need the minister to clarify for this House and my constituents the government's position on transit, and how the government's plans will move forward.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I hear the heckling under the breath of the people opposite saying that this is ridiculous. What's ridiculous is that we have, as a government, put on the table \$9 billion to build projects in the GTHA—\$9 billion.

I was very surprised and disappointed to read the mayor's letter. I want to assure the House, as I have a number of times, that we are fully, fully intentional in moving ahead on the big five projects. I've very concerned that the mayor would release partial and inaccurate information before that plan is fully developed, because Metrolinx wants to work with the city to put that

plan in place. There's no intention, I hope, to undermine this process by going public with the information before it's finalized. So I want to say to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

PHARMACISTS

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, why have you knowingly moved forward with a plan to not only make it difficult for family-owned pharmacies to survive but also put patient access to their services at risk?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The reforms we're proposing when it comes to getting fair drug prices for the people of Ontario is a proposal I'm very proud of. I am astonished, frankly, that the party opposite has chosen to take the side of big pharmacy over the side of people who need access to generic drugs. We do acknowledge that access to pharmacies is a very important part of what we need to do to actually enhance the role of pharmacists in our health care spectrum. That's why we've allocated \$22 million to maintain access to pharmacies in rural areas. I have heard from my colleagues about situations in their ridings where there's a concern about access. What I can do is assure you and the member opposite that access to pharmacies—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Again, to the minister: Minister, we've just learned about your own 2009 briefing document at the ministry which outlines how smaller, independent and rural pharmacies, which are about 51%, have "a low capacity" to survive your reforms. There are also analysts, such as the CFIB and Scotia Capital, which have confirmed that it's going to be the little person, the family pharmacy, that is going to be dealt the hardest blow. Yet despite this information, you are moving forward.

Why are you ignoring your own report and these analysts? Will you today do the right thing and go back to the table and resume the negotiations with the pharmacists?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I have been anxious to meet with the pharmacists ever since we released this proposal. They have cancelled meetings. We have requested meetings. It's very important to me that we actually have those conversations with pharmacists, and I'm very disappointed that they have, so far, not made that possible.

I'm also very pleased that health ministers across this country are now looking at what we are doing in Ontario. They recognize that their constituents as well are paying

far too much for generic drugs.

We want to get this right. We want to actually enhance the role of pharmacists. So many of our independent pharmacists are actually looking forward to the new model, where they will be paid for services that they provide to their patients. Those independent pharmacists have a great relationship with their customers. They will be able to take advantage of the payments, almost \$300 million, that we're putting back into pharmacies—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le procureur général. Dans sa décision du 24 mars 2010, le juge Michael Dale Parayeski démontre que les droits des francophones ne sont pas respectés dans certains tribunaux de la famille de la province. Le tribunal de l'agglomération de Simcoe dans le comté de Norfolk est un des tribunaux qui ne permettent pas le classement des documents en français sans le consentement des deux parties. En droit de la famille, obtenir ce consentement revient à ne pas avoir droit à ces services en français.

Monsieur le Procureur général, comment se fait-il que les familles françophones n'ont pas droit au tribunal de la famille en français dans Simcoe?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I thank the member for the question. We've made a lot of progress over the past seven years in providing additional services in French throughout the province of Ontario. We have taken great strides to make sure that wherever they are required in criminal cases, we have the necessary judges and justices of the peace and the crowns and other officials to support that. We'll continue to do that.

In designated areas throughout the province of Ontario, we've made great strides in providing access to other services. If there are issues, if there are challenges—and there may be in certain parts of the province—we're continuing to work with my colleague the minister responsible for francophone affairs, with the francophone lawyers' associations, and we'll work with local officials to address those issues in a positive, proactive, supportive way.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Laissez-moi vous dire, monsieur le Procureur, qu'il y en a des problèmes. Demander à deux personnes qui sont dans le tribunal de la famille de s'entendre sur les services en français est impossible. C'est vraiment dire que les services en français ne sont pas disponibles à ces personnes-là.

Comment se fait-il qu'en 2010—la Loi sur les services en français, c'est 1987—je suis ici, debout, puis je vous pose encore la question, pourquoi n'a-t-on pas droit à des services en français dans la Cour de la famille partout en Ontario? Est-ce que le ministre va assurer la protection du droit des francophones à des procédures en français dans les tribunaux de la famille partout en Ontario?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Yes, we have taken a very proactive stance in passing legislation to support and ensure the provision of French-language services throughout the province of Ontario, and yes, we are complying with the appropriate legislative regime. But we are trying to do more than that, and go beyond it.

In those areas of the province where there are challenges, and some may be identified by my colleague and some may be identified by others, we'll continue to work not only with local officials but with the francophone lawyers' associations and with my colleague the minister responsible for francophone affairs.

We actually received a very helpful and supportive report not long ago with some very good suggestions that we are implementing from the Ombudsman for francophone language issues to make sure that we are ahead of our legislative requirements and are continuing to build on the strong record that we have already. We'll continue to do that.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Leal: My question today is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. This year marks the second annual Family Service Ontario lobby day at Queen's Park, and I want to welcome friends from Peterborough, my riding, here today.

Family Service Ontario represents 46 not-for-profit member agencies that provide community-based mental health services and programs for over 250,000 individuals and families annually, from every age group and socioeconomic status. Could the minister discuss how we have worked with Family Service Ontario in order to support those who support our most vulnerable families?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'd like to thank the member from Peterborough for that question. I would also like to thank Family Service Ontario for coming to Queen's Park today. I want to acknowledge John Ellis, who is the president of Family Service Ontario.

This government is proud of its accomplishments made in partnership with Family Service Ontario. Family Service Ontario partners with agencies that provide a range of support services, everything from employment assistance programs to parent-teen education. Some agencies even offer special programs for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

Today is an opportunity to learn about the great work that Family Service Ontario does. I encourage all MPPs to take time out of their day to meet with them after question period in rooms 228 and 230.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Thank you. I appreciate that very detailed and extensive answer. In my riding, I can tell you that the work of Family Service Ontario is integral to many families throughout my community who have come to rely on the exceptional care that Family Service Ontario provides.

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I understand that our government has increased its support to Family Service Ontario significantly since 2003, whether that is funding for counselling programs, the transition and housing support program or the program of early intervention for children who witness violence. To the minister: Could you tell the Legislature

what support this government has provided and continues to provide to Family Service Ontario?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you again for the question. Our government is committed to supporting Family Service Ontario. Last year, my ministry provided \$7.9 million in funding to Family Service Ontario member agencies for violence-against-women services. We also increased annualized funding for VAW counselling agencies by 3.29%, retroactive to April 1, 2009. We have increased the base budget to Family Service Ontario agencies by 13% since 2003, as well as providing \$3.5 million for enhancements to their transitional and housing support programs and counselling programs. Overall, there has been an almost 200% increase in MCSS funding to Family Service Ontario member organizations.

I wish Family Service Ontario a successful day here at Oueen's Park.

MUNICIPALITIES

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Acting Premier. AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, raised last-minute alarm bells over schedules 10 and 12 of the budget bill. They pointed out that the government's budget bill downloads more costs onto municipalities. I raised the issue at committee this morning.

Acting Premier, the budget bill amends some 27 separate pieces of legislation. The bill, as with so many, has been time-allocated and had a meagre five hours of committee meetings to get comments from those most affected.

Past omnibus bills like the HST act and the Green Energy Act hid severance payments for HST tax collectors and took away municipalities' rights to decide on major projects. Can you tell me what other surprises are hidden in the budget bill before it is too late?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: It was a little bit difficult following the scent of his question, but I will tell you that the budget bill, as you know, is an extensive document that is doing some tremendous things for Ontarians. We know that as we go through this in committee, it gives you an opportunity to see that.

A specific question like this, I think, I will refer back to the Minister of Housing, and we'll get back to you with that kind of an answer.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: The Acting Premier makes my point: It is a very extensive bill. It has 31 schedules and it got five hours of public hearings. We know that the CITCA agreement in the fall budget bill gives these HST tax collectors severance when they aren't being severed.

How can we have confidence in the government's legislation? What has evolved is a legacy of bad legislation and bad public policy. When are you going to start being open, transparent and upfront with the public?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: As I said, if there is a specific question related to that area regarding our municipalities, we'd be happy to get to the root of it.

Let me just say that since 2003, this government has been more open and upfront and consultative with our municipalities than they've ever experienced in the history of the Ontario government.

It's clear, because all of us at some point as ministers in this cabinet have gone before AMO on a regular and consistent basis: We have a law that says that we will consult with our municipalities. We're called before this group, this steering committee, on a regular basis. They know, in advance of legislation being tabled, the direction that we're going in.

These are the kinds of relationships that we've built. The result of that has been a significant amount of work to upload the massive downloading done by your party. I find it very ironic that you in particular would ask

questions about relationships-

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. The McGuinty government is forcing young children in northwestern Ontario with delays and handicaps in their speech and language development to wait up to 18 months—a year and a half—before getting access to speech and language pathologists.

We know that children with delays in their speech and language development who don't receive appropriate professional help will then face subsequent serious

behavioural, social and educational challenges.

My question is this: Does the minister think it is fair when the McGuinty Liberals force these young children to wait up to a year and a half before they get access to

the speech-language pathologists they need?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to have a chance to talk about the importance of ensuring that speech and language therapy is provided to children promptly and at an early age. That is precisely why I will be embarking on a large-scale review of all of our services that we offer children zero to four with Dr. Charles Pascal. We'll be taking a look to ensure that we find a pathway forward for those children who are in our preschool time, and speech pathology and speech therapy which is offered to preschool children through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services is one of those types of programs.

We also work in partnership to deliver that program with children's treatment centres. A significant investment has recently been made in children's treatment

centres to ensure the delivery of that program.

There's a great deal of work to do to ensure that they can transition into school as they age, and we look forward to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: The minister talks about a review. The fact is, the McGuinty Liberals have quietly cut the funding for these services. Even the Toronto Star

confirms that the reason young children from communities like Dryden, Sioux Lookout and Eagle Lake First Nation can't get access to the speech-language pathologists they need is because the McGuinty Liberals, through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Health, "have drastically slashed funding for services by speech-language pathologists."

I don't want to hear about a review. What I want to know is, when will the McGuinty Liberals restore the funding you have cut so that young children who are already struggling get the professional speech and language services they need to succeed in school and, indeed, succeed in life?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I can assure the member opposite that we are very, very committed to giving kids what they need to be the very best they can be. The CCAC budget has gone up by \$680 million—that's 56%—since we were elected.

I do understand that there are challenges around school health supports and speech pathology. What I can tell you is, this is an issue of concern, and that is why we are taking a very good, hard look at this. I have asked the officials to get in touch with the LHINs to find out what's going on to make sure that the LHINs and the CCACs are working together to make sure kids are getting what they need to be the very best they can be.

HEALTH PROMOTION

Mr. David Zimmer: Physical activity is hugely important to the health of Ontarians.

Yesterday, the third International Congress on Physical Activity and Public Health had their opening ceremony right here in the city of Toronto. Participants from all around the world are attending. This is an enormous conference, and it's a mark of prestige that it's being held here in Toronto. It's a forum for the scientific exchange of information between delegates from around the world to discuss and debate health issues and physical activity.

Minister, how are you involved with this international meeting, and what is Ontario's role as the hosting jurisdiction of this important conference?

Hon. Margarett R. Best: I thank the member from Willowdale for his question.

I want to welcome the congress and its 1,100 participants from approximately 55 countries to Toronto. It's taking place from May 5 to 8 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. In fact, I was privileged to welcome delegates at the opening ceremonies yesterday evening, and I also had the opportunity to meet some of the participants.

Our government is cognizant of the importance of physical activity to public health. As such, we support the congress in its work. By the close of the congress, it is anticipated that a new Toronto charter for physical activity will be ratified. This charter will help to guide policy-makers around the world in promoting physical activity, and we certainly welcome it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. David Zimmer: Thank you very much, Minister. I'm aware of various studies such as the Active Healthy Kids Canada report, and there are a lot more studies available. What these studies show is that promoting physical activity, especially among our children and youth, is hugely important if we're going to ensure that we have a healthy youthful population and they can make all their achievements in school and then get on to university.

Minister, what I'm wondering is, if the Toronto chapter is ratified, what renewed scientific momentum will this give to the fight against—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Margarett R. Best: Ontario has been a leading jurisdiction in health promotion, and we are committed to promoting physical activity. In that respect, we have committed \$17 million toward our healthy communities fund to help local partners promote physical activity. We have also invested \$10 million in our after-school initiative to provide children and youth with access to safe, active and healthy after-school activities. We are investing and leveraging significant funding in youth sport and recreation infrastructure through our Ontario recreation infrastructure program and the upcoming Pan American and Parapan American Games.

We also, through the Ministry of Education, are investing—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The time for question period has ended.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to welcome the 13th Windsor Scout Troop, who have joined us today. They are Windsor's oldest active Scout troop.

I'd also welcome to the Legislature today Sarah Rodgers and Patricia Hollingsworth from the Northumberland Community Counselling Centre.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1142 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming Mr. Elisha Laker, executive director of Family Services York Region; Ms. Mariana Benitez, the program director; and Ms. Susan Warren, the manager. Please help me welcome them to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): From my riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London, I would like to welcome a group of students from Corinth Christian School who are visiting and touring Queen's Park today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

EDUCATION WEEK

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm pleased today to be able to rise on behalf of my leader, Tim Hudak, and also the members of the Ontario PC caucus to show our very strong support for Education Week and for all of those in this province who have been affiliated with making our system the success that it is.

This is the annual week where we celebrate with our students, teachers, parents and volunteers, and we see some of the outstanding work that's done within our community schools and also the accomplishments of our publicly funded schools—and they are certainly numerous. I'm sure that all of us have a had a chance this week to visit schools and to see some of the students' academic, athletic and creative skills. Certainly we know that Ontario students are achieving success.

I had the opportunity this week to go to Mary Johnston Public School, a school that I had opened as chair of the school board in 1987. The woman this school was named after, Mary Johnston, the very first female principal in Waterloo region, was there that day, and together, Mary Johnston, those who were invited and the students who had known Mary celebrated her 80th birthday. I can tell you, it was a very special occasion, and we wish her well.

We thank the teachers and all the students who make our system what it is today—a great one.

LONDON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Today, I rise in the House to commend the tremendous efforts of the London Public Library to develop dialogue and solidarity with people in the London community.

The London Public Library sent 16 "living books" to their downtown branch. Living books are individuals who have unique life experiences to share by talking about their stories with others.

Many of these living books share their experiences of struggle, hardship, and, in many cases, how they live on the margins. This program allows all the people to share a rare opportunity for insight and understanding into the complex and dynamic lives of members of our communities. It also provides opportunities for friendship to grow and flourish and to develop sustaining relationships.

This program originated in Denmark, and I'm excited and happy to see it come to my hometown of London. I truly commend the efforts of the London Public Library, and I hope to see this program grow and expand across the province of Ontario. I hope also to see it again next year in London.

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank all my constituents who responded to my recent newsletter and

shared their opinion on a number of important issues, including the HST. Their message was clear: Listen to the people and stop the HST.

In case the Liberals didn't understand how people are feeling about this tax grab, I want to share a few quotes. "I am a small businessman. It will hurt me." "As a senior, I can't afford it." From another senior: "My pension does not allow for more taxes." Another person said, "HST: too big a burden for the working class." One family called it fiscally irresponsible, especially after a recession.

Let me give you an idea of how many people are against this tax grab. Out of 827 respondents, 733 oppose it strongly; that means 89% understand that the cost is being imposed on the people by the Liberal government. They want government to be responsible and accountable, to spend more wisely instead of burdening Ontarians with more taxes.

When will the McGuinty government realize that the people of Ontario are smart? They recognize a tax hike when they see it. They know they can't afford it. And they remember broken promises. As one of my constituents pointed out, "Dalton McGuinty promised not to increase taxes": another instance where people are not being listened to.

The PC caucus has repeatedly asked the McGuinty government to listen to Ontarians about the impact of the HST. I'm listening to the people of Oxford, and their message is clear: No Dalton McGuinty HST tax grab.

SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Mr. Peter Kormos: Twelve-year-old Dakota Turner is a grade 7 student at Empire Public School down in Welland. Dakota was a member of the LEGO team, and it appears that at one point there were some LEGO pieces missing. Well, people got all excited and upset. There was an argument between the teacher and the student, and then between the teacher and the parent of the student, Shirley Turner, and before you know it, the police were called. These are LEGO pieces. I'm not talking real bricks and mortar; I'm talking LEGO. Well, at some point, all hell broke loose.

In any event, Mom calls the local school board trustee, Larry Lemelin. Why not? She voted for him; she elected him; she sent him to the school board so that he could intervene and advocate on behalf of her and her kid in situations like this and perhaps help resolve them. But oh, no, the superintendent of the Niagara district school board has a different idea. You see, this Legislature passed Bill 177, section 248.1, which school boards like Niagara's are using to bully, intimidate and eunuch school board trustees. Elected school board trustees are being told to mind their own business, keep hands off. "We'll deal with this. Go away. Go home."

I say that's wrong. People in Welland elected Larry Lemelin to advocate and fight for them, just like they elected me to advocate and fight for them here at Queen's Park. The Minister of Education should be straightening out these boards of education who just want silent little puppets as trustees and who think that high-paid staff are going to run the show without the interference, direction and direct involvement of elected personnel.

WALTER HACHBORN

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: It is a genuine honour to rise in the House today to speak of one of Kitchener-Conestoga's pillars of the community who has recently announced his retirement, and I understand that Walter is watching today. Welcome, Walter.

In June 1938, at age 17, Walter Hachborn took a job as an apprentice at Hollinger Hardware in Saint Jacobs, Ontario, where he was sweeping floors and sorting nails. In 1950, Walter purchased Hollinger Hardware.

On January 1, 1964, Home Hardware Stores Ltd. was founded. It grew from first-year sales of \$4 million to more than 1,000 stores.

In 2006, under Walter's leadership, Home Hardware donated \$1 million to fund the redevelopment of various units in Waterloo region hospitals.

Walter was named Citizen of the Year of Woolwich township in 1976. He received an honorary degree of doctor of laws from Wilfrid Laurier University in 1985. He was awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in 2003. And not in the least, of course, Walter was appointed a member of the Order of Canada.

Walter will remain as president emeritus of Home Hardware and will always remain the patriarch for this Canadian institution, which he started with his strong commitment to helping the community and helping entrepreneurs in the hardware business.

I wish to congratulate Walter on his retirement and thank him for his tireless contributions in making our economy stronger and helping Kitchener—Conestoga and all of Waterloo region become a better place to live. Thank you, Walter.

HUCK FINN YOUTH FISHING DAY

Mr. John O'Toole: Today I'd like to pay tribute to the volunteers and sponsors of the recent Huck Finn Youth Fishing Day in Uxbridge, which was celebrated on April 24 at Elgin Park in Uxbridge. With close to 3,000 participants, this is one of Ontario's largest outdoor events for children and families. In fact, the surprising thing is that it was free.

I'd like to thank the sponsors, which include the township of Uxbridge; the staff from the regional office in Aurora of the Ministry of Natural Resources—they did a great job; Uxbridge Times-Journal; the Optimist Club; the Uxbridge Royal Canadian Legion; the Durham regional police; the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters; the Pickering Rod and Gun Club; Zehrs Food Plus; and the Fishing Forever foundation.

Special thanks would go to Pat Higgins of the Canadian Tire store in Uxbridge, who was chair of the fishing day event, and his entire committee.

This event teaches the values of conservation and environmental awareness to the next generation.

It was my privilege to attend. Congratulations on an excellent event enjoyed by the hundreds of local families who participated in the event.

There were two people who made a special effort to entertain the kids and have a great time. I'd like to thank Amanda Ferraro from Uxbridge recreational management staff, and Dan Pollard, a local sports announcer on a network television station, who was the emcee for the day on a volunteer basis. They made this a great day for families and children to enjoy the outdoors and the great environment we have in Ontario.

SERVICES FOR THE HEARING-IMPAIRED

Mr. Jim Brownell: Some of our colleagues here in this Legislature might know that May is speech and hearing month. This is a month dedicated to the early detection and prevention of communication disorders, and an opportunity to increase the public's sensitivity to the challenges faced by individuals experiencing them.

One organization that works with children and youth suffering from communication disorders is Voice for Hearing Impaired Children. You may remember their successful Kids HEAR lobby day held here at the Legislature last fall. Voice is celebrating its 45th anniversary this year and is launching an event called Dress Loud Day tomorrow, May 7, to draw awareness to their cause. Children in schools across Ontario will be dressing loud and donating a toonie to help support the good work at Voice. Voice is providing a kit and resources to schools to help educate students about hearing loss and to help develop empathy and understanding of students with hearing disabilities.

Voice is also encouraging workplaces to join in and share information about how to communicate with colleagues about hearing loss. You may find out more about this at their website, voicefordeafkids.com.

Tomorrow I plan to dress loud for this cause. I may not have the loudest costume on, but I certainly will pull out a tie that will support and say, "Yes, I am dressing loud for Voice." This will celebrate the accomplishments of this organization over these 45 years, and I challenge my fellow members here in the Legislature to do that as well.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Mr. Reza Moridi: Six years ago, only 68% of Ontario students were graduating with a high school diploma, but our government has been determined to help more of our young people succeed. That's why we've created new student success programs such as the specialist high skills major. This program allows students to tailor their high school experience to their individual strengths, goals and interests. As a result of programs like this, the graduation rate rose to almost 80% in 2008-09.

Now, during Education Week, our government is going to expand the specialist high skills major program to 100 additional schools.

We are also introducing two new majors centring on sports and not-for-profit community organizations. This brings the total number of majors to 18, which includes subjects such as construction, energy, agriculture and aerospace. In the 2010-11 school year, we project that over 28,000 students in 530 high schools across the province will benefit from this program.

Expanding this program is an important part of our government's new Open Ontario plan to build a well-educated workforce and create more jobs and opportunities for our young people. We will keep working hard to help our students succeed in their education and future careers.

TAXATION

Mr. Charles Sousa: Our government's comprehensive tax reform package includes a new harmonized sales tax that will reduce business costs, increase our competitiveness and create almost 600,000 new jobs. On top of that, our tax reforms include personal income tax cuts and a variety of tax credits to help Ontarians.

We have also heard from First Nations in Ontario who have told us that they want the point-of-sale exemption they currently have under the PST to be continued with the HST as well. Our government agrees with this position. We want First Nations in Ontario to continue to have this point-of-sale exemption.

But to make that happen, we need the agreement of the federal government. That's why we are taking action to move this discussion forward. Our government has signed a memorandum of agreement with the Chiefs of Ontario, represented by the political confederacy, to work together and press the federal government to extend this point-of-sale exemption of the HST. What's more, we will also work together on interim measures until that exemption is restored.

Our government understands how important this exemption is to First Nations in Ontario, and we will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with them to fight for this exemption.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 16, An Act to implement 2010 Budget measures and to enact or amend various Acts / Projet de loi 16, Loi

mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2010 et édictant ou modifiant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? I heard a no.

All those in favour will say "aye." All those opposed will say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1317 to 1322.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura Arthurs, Wayne Balkissoon, Bas Best, Margarett Brownell, Jim Cansfield, Donna H. Colle, Mike Delaney, Bob Dickson, Joe Fonseca, Peter Hoskins, Eric Jaczek, Helena Jeffrey, Linda Kular, Kuldip Mangat, Amrit McMeekin, Ted Meilleur, Madeleine Moridi, Reza Murray, Glen R. Pendergast, Leeanna

Phillips, Gerry Qaadri, Shafiq Ramal, Khalil Rinaldi, Lou Ruprecht, Tony Sergio, Mario Sousa, Charles Wynne, Kathleen O. Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted Clark, Steve DiNovo, Cheri Gélinas, France Hardeman, Ernie Horwath, Andrea Jones, Sylvia Klees, Frank Kormos, Peter MacLeod, Lisa

O'Toole, John Wilson, Jim Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 29; the nays are 13.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 21, 2010, the bill is ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CAPPING TOP PUBLIC SECTOR SALARIES ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE PLAFONNEMENT DES HAUTS TRAITEMENTS DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

Ms. Horwath moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 57, An Act to cap the top public sector salaries / Projet de loi 57, Loi plafonnant les hauts traitements du secteur public.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye." All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The bill provides that a public sector employee's salary shall not exceed the amount that is twice the Premier's annual salary. Exceptions, of course, are provided for, including one for salaries that are established under a collective agreement.

PLANNING AMENDMENT ACT (ENABLING MUNICIPALITIES TO REQUIRE INCLUSIONARY HOUSING), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE (INCLUSION DE LOGEMENTS ABORDABLES PAR LES MUNICIPALITÉS)

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 58, An Act to amend the Planning Act with respect to inclusionary housing / Projet de loi 58, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire à l'égard de l'inclusion de logements abordables.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The Planning Act is amended to include the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income households as a matter of provincial interest.

Section 34 of the act is amended to allow the councils of local municipalities to pass zoning bylaws requiring inclusionary housing in the municipality and regulating the required percentage of affordable housing units in new housing developments in the municipality.

The new section 37.1 of the act allows municipalities to pass bylaws requiring that a specified percentage of housing units in all new housing developments in the municipality be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

Section 51 of the act is amended to allow the approval authority to impose, as a condition to the approval of a plan of subdivision, a requirement that a specified percentage of housing units in all new housing developments in the subdivision be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

MOTIONS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding committees.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Minister?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to attend the 31st annual conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees and that the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to attend the 2010 annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The Speaker has no tabs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I'm working on that.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SERVICES À L'ENFANCE ET À LA FAMILLE

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Today marks a special day here in Ontario. Today is family services day at the Legislature, and I would like to welcome all our partners from Family Service Ontario who are here in the gallery today.

Aujourd'hui nous célébrons, en Ontario, un jour spécial, la journée Services à la famille-Ontario.

This is a time to celebrate and recognize Family Service Ontario organizations and what they do for our province, not only today but each and every day. There are nearly 50 family service agencies across Ontario, which serve more than 250,000 individuals and families each year. These agencies provide a variety of supports to maximize the potential and happiness of our citizens and families, supports such as relationship and financial counselling, substance abuse programs, services for people with disabilities, programs for victims of domestic violence and many more.

1330

Il existe près de 50 organismes de services à la famille en Ontario qui desservent plus de 250 000 particuliers et familles chaque année. Ces organismes fournissent un large éventail de soutiens pour maximiser le potentiel et le bonheur de nos citoyens et de nos familles : des services de counselling pour les familles et des conseils financiers, des programmes de désintoxication, des services aux personnes handicapées, des programmes d'aide aux victimes de violence familiale et bien d'autres encore.

Family service agencies address a wide range of emotional, psychological, physical and financial problems, and have a large impact on the overall well-being of Ontario's families. That means that family service agencies have an impact on the well-being of our communities. By helping to strengthen Ontario's individuals and families, they are helping to strengthen our local communities as a whole. That is certainly something worth recognizing.

Our government is proud to support Family Service Ontario by funding several of their programs, including those for people with disabilities and victims of domestic abuse. Since this government took office, we have invested over \$500 million in developmental services and increased funding for programs that help reduce domestic violence by 46%.

Notre gouvernement est fier de soutenir Services à la famille-Ontario en finançant plusieurs de ses programmes, notamment ceux qui s'adressent aux personnes handicapées et aux victimes de violence familiale.

Depuis l'arrivée au pouvoir de notre gouvernement, nous avons investi plus de 500 millions de dollars dans les services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle et augmenté de 46 % le financement de programmes qui visent à réduire la violence familiale.

Just like Family Service Ontario, we know how important it is to provide the right supports to those who need them in their own communities close to home. Often, it is these types of services that allow people in need to become healthier individuals and lead more successful lives.

In our economic climate, more Ontarians than ever have turned to family service agencies to cope with issues of stress, unemployment and financial difficulties. These agencies are helping to get Ontarians back on their feet.

À notre époque de ralentissement économique, de plus en plus d'Ontariens et d'Ontariennes se tournent vers les organismes de services à la famille pour les aider à surmonter des problèmes de stress, de chômage et de difficultés financières. Ces organismes les aident à se stabiliser. Nos collectivités s'en portent mieux et notre province aussi.

Across the province today, people are celebrating family services day and the importance of the Family Service Ontario organization. I want to encourage the members of this Legislature to do the same.

Un grand merci pour les services dévoués que fournissent les employés et les bénévoles de Services à la famille-Ontario.

Thanks to the dedicated service that Family Service Ontario provides, Ontario's citizens and families are getting stronger, our communities are better for it, and our province is better for it, too.

SOUTH ASIAN AND ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Eric Hoskins: As Ontarians, we are privileged to live in a province that is open to new people and new cultures. Ontario is one of the most diverse societies in the world, and I believe that Ontario draws its strength from its rich cultural tapestry. It therefore gives me great pleasure to rise today to recognize the contributions of

peoples from the South Asian and Asian communities as we celebrate May as both Asian Heritage Month and South Asian Heritage Month.

The origins of these communities are diverse, comprised not of one peoples but many, and consisting of a range of linguistic, ethnic and religious groups. Coming from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Africa, the Caribbean, South America and other parts of the world, their journey and their experiences are as varied as their ancestries.

The journey of Ontario's Asian and South Asian communities to Canada is a story of struggle and survival. In the 1800s, the Chinese and Taiwanese migrants arrived in Canada both to work in the gold rush and to build our nation's railroad. After the railroad was built, a Chinese head tax, followed by the Chinese Exclusion Act, were introduced to further limit immigration of Chinese people.

In April 1914, 376 Punjabis arrived in Vancouver on the Komagata Maru. These men, sadly, were refused entry, and after two months they were returned to India. Canada's refusal to grant these people safe haven ultimately resulted in the death of 19 of the passengers and the imprisonment of many.

During World War II, Japanese-Canadian families were uprooted from their homes and placed in internment camps. Regrettably, their property was confiscated and their lives were never the same.

Those were times of profound injustice and represent a dark chapter in our nation's history. But in spite of these struggles, the Asian and South Asian communities endured and persevered. Today, Ontario's Asian and South Asian communities have both grown and prospered. Currently, there are almost two million Asians and South Asians making their home in Ontario. Ontarians of Asian and South Asian heritage have contributed immensely in shaping Ontario's cultural identity.

The entrepreneurial spirit of these communities has created thriving businesses in neighbourhoods right across Ontario. Internationally renowned authors such as Michael Ondaatje, Wayson Choy and Rohinton Mistry have contributed a distinctly Canadian voice to our literature. Filmmaker Deepa Mehta and her movies have received Oscar acclaim. Environmentalist and activist David Suzuki has raised awareness of global warming and environmental issues. And Adrienne Clarkson served with distinction as Canada's first Asian-Canadian Governor General.

It is because of Ontario's Asian and South Asian communities that our government has actively sought to strengthen its relationship with India, Pakistan, Japan and China. Asian and South Asian Ontarians have influenced every facet of our businesses, industries, culture, science and technology, and communities. During May, we recognize their important contributions to Ontario's settlement, development and future.

In that spirit, I encourage my colleagues and all Ontarians to celebrate Asian Heritage Month and South

Asian Heritage Month, and I ask all of us to recognize the contributions of these dynamic communities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Responses?

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus to recognize family service day at Oueen's Park.

Family Service Ontario represents 46 not-for-profit agencies across the province that provide many services, from marriage counselling to substance abuse programs, therapy for abuse survivors and programs for the developmentally disabled. Not surprisingly, intake numbers are up at family services branches across Ontario. This is, no doubt, in part due to the loss of 260,000 manufacturing jobs in Ontario. More and more families are tapping into the resources that Family Service Ontario agencies have to offer.

It is important to acknowledge the important work Family Service Ontario does as there are over 30,000 new cases and 50,000 more beneficiaries receiving Ontario Works payments than a year ago, and Family Service Ontario locations do not turn anyone away.

Family Service Ontario provides a great network to families who are not sure where to go for help. Their open-door network helps them to work with local partners to ensure that families are receiving individualized care tailored to their particular issue.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the over 3,000 volunteers who take time out of their lives to help families and individuals get the services that Family Service Ontario provides. It is your dedication to our community that makes a huge difference in the lives of others. I also want to thank the volunteers and board members. I know what kind of time commitment serving on a board can be, and your time is appreciated.

The important role of family service organizations is shown in our communities and proves that they are working, that they play a valuable role in our communities.

I want to thank you for allowing me to be part of your education and awareness day today, along with a number of my colleagues. Your luncheon and meetings with MPPs today are valuable in educating all of us on the wide range of services you provide. It's important that all MPPs are made aware of the family service organizations that are meeting the needs of individuals in our communities.

I want to again thank Family Service Ontario for all of their hard work. Communities and families are healthier as a result of your commitment.

SOUTH ASIAN AND ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Ted Arnott: On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I'm pleased to rise today to mark Asian and South Asian Heritage Month. Our party's leader, the Leader of the

Opposition, Tim Hudak, serves as our caucus critic to the Minister of Citizenship, and I'm pleased to have this chance to speak today on his behalf.

Canadians of South Asian and Asian backgrounds have made and continue to make very significant contributions to our province and to our country. In 2001, our government supported the bill to proclaim May as South Asian Heritage Month and May 5 as South Asian Arrival Day.

My colleague at the time Raminder Gill, who served as the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale, introduced this legislation as a private member's bill, and it passed third reading on December 13, 2001. We're very proud of that legislation, which enshrined legal recognition of our South Asian community in Ontario.

That bill appropriately states the following:

"South Asian immigrants began arriving in Ontario at the start of the 20th century. Working primarily in the sawmill industry, South Asian immigrants settled in various parts of the province. For South Asians, the month of May has been a time of celebration and commemoration of their arrival from the Indian subcontinent to the Americas beginning on May 5, 1838.

While most South Asians came to our country from India, many others came to Ontario from such places as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Mauritius, Singapore, Malaysia, Fiji, the United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. Today, South Asians make up a significant proportion of Ontario's populations and are proud to draw upon their heritage and traditions, contributing to many aspects of culture, commerce and public service across this province."

Asian communities have their own stories to tell.

A few years ago, my colleague in the Legislature the member for Newmarket-Aurora, no doubt with the assistance of my friend Dr. Alex Roman, noted that many of those stories were struggles of pain, discrimination and anguish. He also pointed out, however, that settlement in Canada contributed to strong families and strong communities that continue to offer cultural richness in which all Canadians can share and take pride.

So, on behalf of the leader of the official opposition, I want to offer my very best wishes to all Asian Canadians at this time of celebration of your heritage.

SOUTH ASIAN AND ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of Andrea Horwath and the New Democratic Party and add my congratulations regarding Asian and South Asian Heritage Month.

Certainly, we know that Asian countries comprise the greatest group of immigrants. However, they also comprise the greatest group of immigrants who suffer from poverty and suffer from the lack of entry into some professions. Just this last year, Ontario has lost training

programs for international medical graduates because there was not sufficient capacity in the system.

I noticed with some anguish that the minister omitted Tibetans from his list of South Asians. Perhaps the reason for this is that the minister refused to raise the flag for the Tibetans, recognizing them as a community. The answer we got is that the United Nations doesn't recognize them as a nation when in fact he has raised the flag for Métis and other groups that are not recognized as nations either by the United Nations.

Also, the federal government donated \$3.3 million to the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre. Again, the federal Minister of Immigration asked this minister if this government would contribute as well and was given a flat refusal, no, ignoring the rights of the Tibetan community.

The largest single group of Tibetans in the world live in Toronto, outside of Nepal and India. So I have to ask, on behalf of my constituents, why are the Liberals ignoring Tibetans again? It's outrageous. Certainly, this is a group of refugees who have needs. They're the symbol of non-violence and peace throughout the world, with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Certainly, I hope that by the time of His Holiness's visit next October, the government will have rectified the above and will have contributed to the cultural centre, and will have raised the flag for Tibet just like it does for everybody else.

I'm going to leave some time for my colleague, but I look forward to the minister's response to my interjections here and, certainly, his response to the Tibetan community.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SERVICES À L'ENFANCE ET À LA FAMILLE

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to rise and speak about Family Service Ontario and highlight the good work they do.

Thousands of staff and volunteers work with Family Service Ontario to help families deal with a range of difficulties. Families face many stresses today: unemployment or precarious employment, trouble in the workplace, marital difficulties, financial hardship, parenting problems, crime, violence, and the list goes on. Supporting families now is as important as ever, and this is what Family Service does. Family Service Ontario provides support through counselling. They help families deal with their individual situations.

But Family Service Ontario does more. It also advocates for public policy changes to improve family health and well-being by reducing the sources of stress in the first place.

There is a new report by York University professor Dennis Raphael called Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts. It talks about how stress affects our minds and our bodies. It points to the sources of stress: low income, poor-quality housing, food insecurity, inadequate working conditions, insecure employment and discrimination. These are conditions the government can and must address, and Family Service Ontario helps point us in the right direction.

For example, Family Service Ontario is a partner in Campaign 2000, which has a long and distinguished history in advocating for the reduction of child poverty in Canada. They have pushed the Ontario government to commit to a poverty reduction strategy, and they continue to push for the government to strengthen its strategy by increasing minimum wage above the poverty line, by raising social assistance rates to a livable level, and by introducing new food and housing benefits.

Congratulations to Family Service Ontario and all of its member agencies. Your service to individuals and families from Windsor to Thunder Bay to Ottawa is so valuable and an inspiration to us all.

Il me fait extrêmement plaisir de pouvoir dire quelques mots en faveur de services familiaux de l'Ontario. Pour ma communauté, c'est le Service familial de Sudbury Family Service, qui est une des agences membre de leur association. Comme vous le savez, à Sudbury, les temps sont durs. Nous avons une grève qui perdure depuis près de 10 mois. Non seulement la crise économique nous a touché dans le Nord-Est, mais elle touche également de plus près mes constituants et les résidents de Sudbury à cause de la grève.

On est fier d'avoir le Service familial de Sudbury, qui a relevé le défi et aide notre communauté. Merci; thank you for your good work.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy now."

It is signed by hundreds and hundreds of residents from Dufferin-Caledon. I'm pleased to affix my name to it and give it to page Tristen.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients under" certain "conditions..."; and

1350

"Whereas" since "October 2009, insured PET scans" are "performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly ... to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk with Ana.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the worldwide demand for water is expected to be 40% greater than the current supply in the next 20 years; and

"Whereas Ontario has developed many new clean water technologies and practices since the Walkerton water contamination, which resulted from ... poor water regulation practices of the former Conservative government; and

"Whereas Ontario has now implemented many new, improved practices for clean water regulation, developed better policies and fostered new clean water technologies; and

"Whereas the Ontario government's Open Ontario plan includes strategies to increase our province's ability to develop and sell clean water expertise and products to the rest of the world;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government's plan to introduce a new Water Opportunities Act to take advantage of the province's expertise in clean water technology, create jobs and new economic opportunities for our province and help communities around the world access clean water."

I've signed this petition and will send it to the desk with Stig.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

Mr. Frank Klees: We have a crisis developing in speech language pathology services across the province. This is a petition addressing that issue.

"Whereas there are more than 1,000 children in the public and Catholic schools in York region who are on the wait-list for speech-language therapy; and

"Whereas these are children who are struggling with speech and language disorders, which can have serious consequences without timely intervention; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of the Central Community Care Access Centre to assign speech-language pathologists to provide therapy to children on the waitlist, but the McGuinty government has substantially cut funding to the CCAC for speech-language pathology, with the result that children are not being released from the wait-list for treatment; and

"Whereas parents are being told to pay for private therapy if they want timely treatment for their children, but many parents cannot afford the cost of private therapy, with the result that these children are at risk of increased severity of their difficulties, impacting their social and academic skills;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on Premier Dalton McGuinty, the minister responsible for children and youth services, and the Minister of Education to intervene immediately to ensure that the Central CCAC develop a plan that will ensure that the more than 1,000 children in need of speech-language therapy in York region receive the necessary treatment."

This is an urgent matter. I support this petition and am pleased to add my signature.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Peter Kormos: I have a petition certified by the Clerk of the Assembly, pursuant to standing order 39, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads:

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Education's accommodation review process, used by school boards to accommodate students, and which includes closing schools, is flawed, lacks transparency and accountability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-

bly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately stop the closure of Crowland Central Public School and any disputed closures. Develop policies where school boards are more accountable and the ministry, school boards, municipalities and community members work together openly and transparently to deal with funding, schools and declining enrolment."

It's signed by Judy Koole, Phil Bafaro, Clayton Booth and hundreds of others. I affix my signature as well, and I endorse and support this petition enthusiastically.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas multiple sclerosis ... is a debilitating disease affecting a great number of people in Ontario; and

"Whereas there has been a new treatment discovery called the liberation treatment, which addresses chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency ... and that has been seen to provide relief for many MS sufferers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-

bly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario invest in research regarding this new treatment and make it available to victims of MS in Ontario as a listed procedure in a timely manner."

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature to it and send it to the table with page Emma.

TAXATION

Mr. John O'Toole: It's my distinct pleasure to be so high up here. We wonder if we get noticed.

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

"Whereas, by 2010, Dalton McGuinty's new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy" and use every single day. "A few examples include: coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity" for the home; "haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming"; personal care; "home renovations and home services; veterinary care and pet care"; home care; "legal services, the sale of resale homes," stocks, "and funeral arrangements"—the list goes on:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election." Remember? "However, in 2004, he brought in the health tax, which costs" up to "\$900 per individual. And now he is raising our taxes

again;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I'm pleased to sign it, support it and present it to Dylan, one of the new pages here at Queen's Park.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury and Nickel Belt.

"Whereas the strike at Vale Inco mine, mill and smelter in Sudbury and Port Colborne has been going on for too long and showing no chance of settlement; and

"Whereas the strike is causing hardship on the 3,300 workers, their families, the communities and the businesses and contributing to a significant net drain to the economy; and

"Whereas the resumption of production with replacement workers has demonstrated an unwillingness to negotiate a fair collective agreement with the workers and has produced undue tension in the community; and

"Whereas anti-replacement legislation in other provinces has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes."

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of replacement workers; and

"Encourage both parties to negotiate and reach a fair settlement."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk with Jacob.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Joe Dickson: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the government of Ontario has dedicated new funding of \$100 million in addition to the \$50 million already available for professional services;

"Whereas the government is increasing the dispensing fees in the public system to help properly compensate local pharmacists for their valuable contribution to community health care;

"Whereas the opposition who are against these reforms are only interested in helping the big pharmacy chain companies increase their bottom line;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to increase the money that is invested in Ontario's public drug system and to ensure that a higher quality of care is delivered, particularly for families and seniors."

I agree with it, and I affix my signature to it. I will pass it to Emma.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here. I received it from the great town of Tillsonburg. You will know that it's right in the centre of three ridings, so a lot of these would also be from Elgin–Middlesex–London and a lot from Haldimand–Norfolk. Of course, they are predominantly from the county of Oxford. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy now."

I affix my signature to it as I agree with this petition.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas multiple sclerosis (MS) is a debilitating disease affecting a great number of people in Ontario; and

"Whereas there has been a new treatment discovery called the liberation treatment, which addresses chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCVI) and that has been seen to provide relief for many MS sufferers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario invest in research regarding this new treatment and make it available to victims of MS in Ontario as a listed procedure in a timely manner."

Of course, I agree. I affix my signature and send it by way of page Mary.

1400

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from people all over Ontario, and it goes:

"Whereas a company's resumption of production with replacement workers during an illegal strike puts undue tensions and divisions on a community; and

"Whereas anti-replacement legislation in other provinces has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of replacement workers during a strike."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it, and send it to the Clerk with Sarah.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Ted Arnott: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas multiple industrial wind farm projects are being considered by the government of Ontario in the absence of independent, scientific studies on the longterm effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms:

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to put a moratorium on any renewable energy approvals for the construction of industrial wind farms in the province of Ontario until such time as it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms have been fully studied and addressed."

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm delivering this on behalf of my colleague from Newmarket-Aurora because I do believe that the government seems to—and this is not a pun—pay only lip service to the problem that I will address here in a second.

"Petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas there are more than 1,000 children in the public and Catholic schools in York region who are on the wait list for speech-language therapy; and

"Whereas these are children who are struggling with speech and language disorders which can have serious consequences without timely intervention; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of the Central Community Care Access Centre to assign speech-language pathologists to provide therapy to children on the waitlist, but the McGuinty government has substantially cut funding to the CCAC for speech-language pathology, with the result that children are not being released from the wait-list for treatment; and

"Whereas parents are being told to pay for private therapy if they want timely treatment for their children, but many parents cannot afford the cost of private therapy, with the result that these children are at risk of increased severity of their difficulties, impacting their social and academic skills;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on Premier Dalton McGuinty, the Minister Responsible for Children and Youth Services, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister of Education to intervene immediately to ensure that the Central CCAC develop a plan that will ensure that the more than 1,000 children in need of speechlanguage therapy in York region receive the necessary treatment."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it, and send it down with Yidu.

SERVICE CENTRES

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas 401 service centres at Mallorytown, Ontario, were closed in September 2009 and 250 jobs were lost; and

"Whereas the community has identified the need for a staffed full-service tourist kiosk as part of the redevelopment of the Mallorytown service centres; and

"Whereas the completion date for reconstruction of these centres could be delayed past spring 2011; and

"Whereas the reeve and council of Front of Yonge township have passed a resolution giving the government approval of construction 24 hours a day, seven days a week to expedite the project;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Transportation accelerate reconstruction of the Mallorytown service centres based on the local council's wishes and commit to enhanced tourist service improvements at these sites."

I agree with the petition and will affix my signature for the table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time for petitions has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

GASOLINE TAX FAIRNESS FOR ALL ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR TOUS À L'ÉGARD DE LA TAXE SUR L'ESSENCE

Mr. Yakabuski moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 40, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to matching rebates of gasoline tax that the Minister provides to municipalities / Projet de loi 40, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun à l'égard des remboursements de la taxe sur l'essence similaires consentis aux municipalités par le ministre.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Before I begin, I want to make a comment on the statement earlier by the member for Kitchener-Conestoga about Walter Hachborn. I came in just near the last part of it, but I have to give some personal recollection.

Walter Hachborn, the president emeritus of Home Hardware Stores Ltd., is one of the finest human beings I have ever had the honour of knowing. I was pleased to hear her statement today that Walter has announced his retirement—I didn't hear it all. I'm not sure what Walter's age is, but it is significant. It would be somewhere up around 90, I would think.

I've got to tell you that we were Home Hardware dealers in our family from 1978 to 2001, when my wife and I sold the business. But our relationship with Walter goes back before that. In fact, it goes back to the year I was born, when Walter came up to Barry's Bay and merchandised our hardware store, which was built late in 1957 and opened in January 1958. My father and he had a relationship from then, and I had the opportunity to get to know him as a Home Hardware dealer.

I'm going to tell you that that man is the face of hardware in this country. There are few people with the knowledge and the background. She talked about the many honours and awards he has had bestowed upon him, and I can tell you that every one of them is more than deserved.

I've got to tell you that I still get a Christmas card from Walter and Jean every year—it's the kind of human beings they are—and I have not been a dealer since 2001. I know it's my own time that I'm using, but it's more than valuable for a human being of that stature, one of the great humanitarians I have ever had the privilege of knowing.

Now to the business at hand: my gas tax bill, Bill 40. This is not the first time I have addressed this Legislature on the fundamental fairness of a piece of gas tax rebate legislation that would ensure that all municipalities share in a portion of the gas tax they pay, and having it rebated to them from the provincial government. I've made this argument in this House before, and I know that I get arguments back.

I'm shocked at the arguments back from government members, particularly rural members, who try to justify the government's position of not giving a nickel back to communities other than those that have a public transportation system. I'm absolutely shocked at the logic with which they try to defend it, saying, "Are you suggesting, Mr. Yakabuski, that we take funding away from the communities that have a public transportation system?"

I say to the members over there: You're budgeting to spend \$126 billion this fiscal year. You need to figure out

how you're going to spend that money. We're not suggesting that you make any cuts to communities that have a public transportation system. We're suggesting that you learn how to manage your budget: \$126 billion, and you haven't got a nickel for those communities that don't have a public transportation system? I say, shame on you.

What has given me reason to believe that sooner or later this may happen is that the federal government has seen the wisdom. This began under the federal Liberal government, and the federal Conservative government has extended it, enhanced it and made it permanent. They've made it permanent that all communities in this province will get a share of the gas tax that they pay every time they fill their tanks at the pump.

In rural Ontario and everywhere else, you know that everybody is going to be hit with a further 8% come July 1, because Dalton McGuinty thinks there's a little bit left in your pocket and he wants it for himself. Well, it's about time some of that money started to come back to the rural communities.

1410

I was pleased, when I brought in my gas tax bill the first time, that the warden of Renfrew county at the time, Bob Sweet, came down to support me on that gas tax bill, and he continues to support me in my efforts to bring this bill forward. In fact, I have a quote from him here, and I'm going to read it. I have a whole bunch of these quotes here:

"Congratulations on moving forward on this extremely important issue. I attempted to have this issue as part of the fiscal review"—he was on the fiscal review committee—"but was not successful. It was on the table right up to the very last moment and then was withdrawn. I fully agree it is about fairness and sustainable funding. It is all about the rural versus the urban, as I witnessed the last time I was your guest when you had the second reading. I know Renfrew county will be fully behind you on this effort. John, it took me 12 years to get a driving licence office. Go for it."

You know what Renfrew county receives this year from the federal government in gas tax rebates? It's \$2,552,000. That's what the federal government sends back to Renfrew county.

In North Algona Wilberforce, reeve Harold Weckworth and his council, in a motion moved by councillors Lorenz Kelo and Ruth Schoenfeldt, support my motion. North Algona Wilberforce township in my riding receives \$87,000 from the federal government.

Mayor Ann Aikens from the town of Deep River: "Small and rural areas of the province rely on the roads to get to work, hospitals and other health care, schools, etc. We do not have access to mass transit, and although mass transit is important to large urban areas, our roads/public highways are just as important to us." The town of Deep River gets \$129,000 from the federal government.

The mayor of North Grenville township, Bill Gooch: "We will be passing a resolution of support at our next

council meeting." That's a friend of the member from Leeds-Grenville. North Grenville township gets \$435,000 from the federal government.

Mayor Rick Bonnette of Halton Hills: "For the 2008-09 year, we would have been eligible for a maximum payment of \$537,482 based on the population/ridership formula.... For 2009 we received \$158,328 from the province."

Do you know what Halton Hills is getting from the federal government? They get \$1,695,000 from the federal government.

Allen Taylor, the mayor of the township of East Garafraxa, the warden of Dufferin county and the immediate past chair of ROMA, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association: "The municipal roads under our jurisdiction are our transit system. A rebate of the provincial gas tax, or at least a significant portion thereof, is the only fair way of treating rural Ontario with respect to our urban counterparts."

The township of East Garafraxa gets from the federal government \$73,000; Dufferin county, \$1,670,000. I could go on and on, and I might come back to them. But I've got quotes from other areas as well.

I just try to make members understand how fundamentally right it is that people get a share of their gas tax back. If you live in a rural community—I know many members on the other side, and I'll be interested to see who supports this and who doesn't support it. If you live in a rural community, you can't go anywhere without getting into a vehicle and driving somewhere, yet you pay that tax every time you fill up that tank. You spend a disproportionately greater amount of your discretionary income on gasoline and diesel fuel over someone who lives in an urban area, because you don't have any choice. But you're getting nothing back from this provincial government. It is time they understood fairness.

I know the Minister of Transportation is here. She commented, "Do you want us to cut?" If she'd heard the first part of the speech, I said that we're not talking about cutting anybody. You're spending \$126 billion in this province. It's about time you figured out how to budget it. It's not a question of allocation. It's a question of fairness. It's a question of treating the people who pay the taxes with the fairness of giving them something back for it. It is a fundamental belief of people that if you give something, you get something back for it-other than charity. Well, we don't consider the government a charitable organization. They pay money on their taxes, they fill up their gas tanks and they get charged a tax; and they're going to get whacked with the HST on July 1. It's about time they got something back for that. That's all they're asking for: some fairness from this government. We get it from the federal government. We even got it from the Liberal federal government—can you believe that? But this government—maybe another glass of water---

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Take your time. Mr. John Yakabuski: It is certainly time.

I want to make one thing very clear: It is the policy of this party on this side of the House, articulated by our leader Tim Hudak at the OGRA/ROMA conference, this year that if we are elected, rural municipalities will share in the gas tax. Everybody who pays gas tax in this province has a right to expect some benefits from it, and in those rural communities their bridges, their roads, their streets are their public transportation system, and they need to get something back for it.

I have many colleagues today who are going to speak in support of this—I hope. I'm passionate about this issue. I have brought this bill before this House four times. If I didn't believe in it, I would not keep bringing it. It is time that people on all sides of this House recognize the fundamental fairness of a gas tax rebate for all communities in this province. I'm asking members of the government side and I'm asking members of the third party to finally stand up for rural people who pay that tax and give them a fair share of it back so we can make sustainable decisions about how we plan for fixing roads, repairing bridges etc. If it is a formula that's in place. these communities will know each and every year what they're getting back. Every year they'll know that this is something they can budget for and they can plan for. Sustainability by fairness—I think it's a wonderful concept.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I want to say that I will be supporting the motion by the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke because I think it deserves a proper debate in committee. It would be helpful to have hearings and have a lot of people from everywhere in Ontario come and speak to this kind of issue.

I have to admit I get nervous when we sometimes pit cities against rural communities or rural communities against cities, and while it appears that there is no attack on cities, because this is a friendly discussion about how we all get a fair share, I often worry about how we pit cities against rural communities. It is not a very healthy argument when we hint at it, directly or indirectly. It makes me awfully nervous, I have to tell you.

For me, it's a matter of: How do we address the needs of all of our citizens? Are we doing it well? As opposed to, the north and rural communities need to secede from the city of Toronto or the city of Toronto needs to secede from the rest of Ontario because we just don't understand each other and that is the way to solve our problems—geographic, economic, social, cultural etc. It's just a wrong kind of debate, and it's a very hurtful debate. It happens here often, where you have a lot of members in this Legislature making all sorts of preposterous comments about how we are different each from the other. Yes, we are different; that is the fact of our Canadian geography. I often say that Ontario, I believe, is three times bigger than Italy, although I've heard the number two times bigger than Italy. It's one huge—

Mrs. Laura Albanese: It's four.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I've heard three, others say two; you're saying four. I believe three is the correct number.

Think about it: It's a huge province. Italy has 60 million—a bit less now—and in this province we have 12 million and something. Imagine how huge this province is; of course, we are geographically different, socially, culturally—and, yes, economic differences exist.

1420

So I am often very cautious and wary about how we approach an issue that makes it appear that we are fighting someone else, as opposed to the question that the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke did not ask, and that question is, is the money adequate to take care of our infrastructure needs across all of Ontario?

The question, the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke says, is the following: If 110 communities have gas dollars, should the other 300 communities that don't have transit get equal access to those dollars for their communities? My view is, is that the right question? What I'm proposing to the member, or at least to the other members who are listening to this discussion, is, are we getting adequate support for our infrastructure in those communities where we don't have transit versus those where we do?

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The member from London-Fanshawe, the chief cheerleader of the Liberal Party, says we do. You are a chief cheerleader, I've got to admit, and my sense is that you'll be speaking to the bill, because you're a trooper and they need you on the other side; I can tell.

My view is that we need to address the needs of all of our communities. I've got to tell you, we've been attacking this government over the whole matter of Transit City because they have taken away \$4 billion, and then to nuance it, they say, "Oh, we really haven't cut \$4 billion. We merely delayed it." The Premier simply argues that he's able to get \$4 billion in savings by delaying and accomplishing the same thing. I think how magical that is, that a Premier can get \$4 billion worth of savings by extending the timeline by two years and achieve the same thing. To me, it's alchemy. It cannot be done. Yet the minister, the Premier and other Liberals continue to argue that they haven't cut Transit City funding, that it's merely a delay and nothing more, and not only that, but that we can accomplish the same thing with \$4 billion less by extending it by two years. I don't understand that. I just don't get it, and I believe that most reasonable people in Ontario, both in the north, the east, the west, the south and the centre of this province, understand that you can't take \$4 billion away from Transit City and accomplish the same thing.

So I argue, if you can accomplish the same thing by delaying for two years and save \$4 billion, why don't you delay it by four years and save \$8 billion and accomplish the same thing? Because if you can do it in two, you can do it by delaying it by four years and save \$8 billion. You understand? It's illogical. It doesn't make any sense.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I know. My friend Lou, I know you get it, and you're probably going to speak to

this. Lou, where are you? Northumberland—Quinte West? Yes. I know you get it, Lou. Most of the chief Liberal cheerleaders get it, because you're cheerleading over there. The problem is that the citizens and the taxpayers of this province see it a little better than some of you, because you're chief boosters. Whether you get it or not, understand it or not, is irrelevant: You've got your lines. You've got your lines and you're going to say what you're going to say. Of course, the opposition parties just don't know what they are saying. Of course.

So, member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, I say to you that transit dollars are not sufficient to be able to do what we want to do. The dollars that were promised, we're not going to get, and we're not going to be able to do the things that we had hoped. It's not going to be enough for Toronto and it won't be enough for Ottawa. It won't be enough for the major cities in this province, and it will certainly not be enough to deal with rural communities and northern communities that have infrastructure problems, whether they be bridges, whether they be roads, or whatever infrastructure is required across this land.

So my question is about adequacy of dollars. Would we get our fair share, whether you are in a rural community or a northern community, by simply redistributing the gas tax a little more evenly across Ontario? I don't think so. That's the argument I'm making. I don't think you're going to get that fairness by distributing—and, in my mind, diluting—the dollars that are available, that are inadequate, and spreading them beyond the 100 communities and giving them to the other 300 communities that don't have enough. I don't see it. In my mind, as much as I accept the argument of fairness, if you take the limited dollars that are there and spread them, it's not going to be fair to you any more than it's going to be fair to those who are going to get less.

That's why, I argue with my friendly Liberals, those few on the left—and there aren't too many; I think my left hand would more than suffice to count them-and some of the progressive Tories—and I use my right hand; there aren't too many there. That's why I say that when you argue in support of \$5 billion going to the corporate sector and \$1.2 billion in income tax reductionsremember, income taxes are progressive taxes, and you are proud to say you're cutting income taxes. Progressive taxes are being cut, and \$5 billion is going to the corporate sector, with no guarantees of any job protection or job increases, with a deficit of over \$20 billion? Then you say we have to cut money for the speech-language pathologists and other special education in our boards of education, and people with disabilities, because we just don't have enough money to help people with disabilities. Yet you have money to give away to corporations that don't create jobs and \$1.2 billion of reductions in income tax, our most progressive tax? Instead of increasing, you're decreasing, and you've got no money.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The point, I say to my former friend and chair of the Toronto board—where is my friend from, which riding? I forget. Etobicoke Centre.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: Talk about the bill.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: She says, "Speak to the bill." But I am.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: No, you're not.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I am.

The Liberals will argue that there is plenty of gas money to go around and it's more than adequate. The Liberals might argue—I'm not sure, but we'll hear from the chief cheerleader on the other side, to see what arguments he will make on behalf of the member for Etobicoke Centre, to see whether they jibe. I don't know what arguments they will make to oppose it, but my argument, and I'm speaking to it, is that there isn't an adequacy of dollars to not only deal with those 100 communities getting transit money, but to deal with those who get nothing.

The Minister of Transportation has eliminated the replacement program upgrading aging bus service. This government has eliminated the Ontario bus replacement program, something that many municipalities rely on. The government says, "No, we really haven't eliminated that because we've got the gas tax, so we're going to spread that out, and they'll be able to use that money." My friend from Etobicoke Centre will say, "But that's

enough. They're getting money."

Yes, they'll always whine, I imagine you would argue, because it's never enough, you might say. The point is,

it's not adequate. It isn't.

To my friend from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, I'm going to support the motion because, as a matter of principle, on the issue of fairness, it will be good to have a debate about how we provide support to rural and northern communities that often do not get the justice and the financial support they deserve. Remember, it's a huge province, and we have to help out the rural and northern communities in order to achieve the fairness that this member and others are looking for.

1430

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to be able to speak on the private member's bill, Bill 40, from the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, which proposes extending the gas tax to road and bridge projects. I will be speaking against the bill.

The member contends in his remarks that rural municipalities are badly done by. He would have you believe that rural municipalities don't get any money for roads and bridges. In fact, he said a few minutes ago, and I quote, "They"—the government—"haven't got a nickel for communities that haven't got a transit system." That's just not accurate.

Let's talk about the real information. Our government, in fact, has made a priority of investing in transportation of all types: roads, bridges, highways, transit, whether it be buses, trains, GO Transit. We understand that everybody in this province needs transportation, and we recognize that not all municipalities have a public transit system. We recognize that in many municipalities, roads

and bridges are the way you get from A to B. That's why, since we were elected in 2003, we have been providing money for road and bridge projects across this province.

For example, one of the many bills we brought forward that the Conservatives voted against was the Investing in Ontario Act, which gave \$1.1 billion to municipalities across this province. And if their priority was roads and bridges, they were free to spend it on roads and bridges.

If you look at the surface explanation of how the money was distributed, you would be told that it was based on population. That is largely true, but that's not the whole story. Because I live in an area that has some urban municipalities with transit and some rural municipalities without transit, when that money came out in August 2008, I thought, "I'm going to figure this out."

It actually turned out that my municipality of Guelph, which is a single-tier municipality, got less per capita than the rural areas of Wellington county, because in the rural areas in Wellington county, people got counted twice. They got counted once as residents of the county of Wellington, and the county of Wellington got money, and they got counted a second time as residents of the lower-tier municipality, and the lower-tier municipality got funding too. So, on that \$1.1 billion, the rural municipalities in this province in fact got more money per capita than the urban single-tier municipalities. I'll bet most of you who are complaining over there didn't bother to do the calculation, did you?

The municipal infrastructure investment initiative, MIII: again, it was up to the municipality to decide what their priority was. Roads and bridges were a possibility; \$450 million was available to municipalities for roads and bridges if they wished.

There was another fund announced in the 2008 budget that was explicitly for roads and bridges: \$400 million. COMRIF, the Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund, is not available to municipalities like my municipality, because Guelph has too many people, and that's okay. It's supposed to be rural infrastructure.

But one of the intakes, or several of the intakes—I actually used to have some of rural Wellington and one of the rural municipalities, the township of Guelph-Eramosa, and I paid a great deal of attention to how they did on that. This was a municipality that was very, very smart. It went out and hired an engineer to look at the condition of all the bridges in that municipality, and had the engineering studies done. So, as opportunities for COMRIF came forward, they applied. Out of COMRIF, the Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund, they were able to totally replace six or seven different bridges—many millions of dollars. They were ecstatic because they were able to replace bridges that they would never have been able to replace simply based on the local rural tax infrastructure.

We've also had the Ontario Infrastructure Projects Corp., because one of the problems that small municipalities face is that they can't borrow at a favourable interest rate. That allows rural municipalities to borrow at the provincial interest rate, which means that they can get money much more cheaply if they wish to debenture projects.

Of course, recently we've had the federal-provincial infrastructure fund. I'm not sure which roads in this province the members opposite have been driving up and down, but in my part of the province you can't get here from there because there is so much federal-provincial infrastructure money that has gone into reconstructing the roads and the sewers and the bridges of this province. I know I have trouble getting to my constituency office in the morning because of all the money that has gone into roads and bridges through the federal-provincial infrastructure fund. So I totally reject—and that's just some of them. There's the connecting links program, there's the Ontario municipal infrastructure program—it goes on and on and on. There are lots of programs that make money available to roads and bridges in this province.

I make no apologies whatsoever for the fact that after the Conservatives cancelled transit money, we're back in the business of funding transit. I make no apologies for that, because no matter where you live in this province, it does matter that we have cleaner air to breathe and that people who can reasonably get off the highways get onto transit. That means that other people will still be out there on the roads—we understand that—but for goodness' sake, let's get the people who can get on transit onto transit. In fact, since 2003 we have invested \$9.3 billion in public transit.

Let me give you a little bit of information about the gas tax funding. Ninety-three transit systems have got \$316 million this year in gas tax money and, since 2004, \$1.6 billion in gas tax funding. My own municipality has gotten \$2.6 million this year. It's allowed us to extend the transit service. I make no apologies for this.

What I do want to say in closing is that our government isn't pitting rural against urban. Our government is funding transportation for everyone.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is a great privilege to be able to address the assembly today to support my colleague from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke in his bill, which he's brought forward, I believe, four or five times to this chamber, due to the equality issue, the one that he wants to fight for on behalf of the municipalities within his communities. I want to applaud, first and foremost, John Yakabuski for being that dedicated to his constituents to continually use private members' business to advocate for those interests.

I would like to just make a brief remark about my colleague from Guelph. I think it's very simplistic to say that if you're in a rural community, you ought to be using transit. I happen to be privileged to work in this chamber for a suburban rural riding. I can flatly let her understand one thing, flatly let her know: It is impossible to have transit systems in rural communities to get them downtown, and it would be cost-ineffective.

The reality is that this Liberal government has chosen time and again to put all their eggs in one basket. All my colleague is requesting with this piece of legislation is that we provide fairness for our rural communities and that we ensure that all municipalities have the ability to see sustainable funding for their infrastructure projects, whether you're talking about COMRIF or MIII. All these programs—they have never been that fair to all municipalities. It allows the government of the day to pick winners and losers. We oppose that.

Laughter.

1440

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The government is laughing, saying that there's nothing wrong with that. I can tell you one thing: We think there needs to be sustainable funding, we think there needs to be fair and equitable funding, and the best way to do that is through the gas tax. I want

to applaud him for doing that.

I'm actually shocked that some of these members opposite who pretend to represent their constituents in this chamber consistently defeat Conservative private members' business, even if it's the right thing to do. This bill is the right thing to do, and I can assure you that the entire Progressive Conservative caucus stands with our member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. We're going to support him today, and we hope the other members of this chamber do the same.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I wish I had a lot of time to respond to my friend from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, because I listened to him carefully about his proposal to this House today. I listened a lot, and I don't agree with him. When we come to this place, we have to create a balance. We don't pick and choose. We don't create a division between rural Ontario and the cities.

What I think the member from Spadina mentioned a little bit about this stuff was, we don't pick and choose. We treat everyone in the province of Ontario on an equal basis. Our obligation and duty in this province and this government is to support every location in the province of Ontario. That's why we created the gas tax: to support municipalities across the province of Ontario who have a transit system.

Also, we have a different program and different ministries to support all the rural areas, and also to create some kind of funding to support their bridges, their roads,

their highways and all this in place.

We have the numbers. The member from Renfrew-Nipissing didn't mention how much he received in his riding alone. Madawaska River got almost \$2 million. Also, Chalk River estuary got \$9 million, and \$8 million for Barry's Bay harbour. Also, \$18 million for Highway 17 around Renfrew. All these numbers here which he mentioned in his speech came from this government, from \$1.1 billion of investment in infrastructure for rural Ontario for the citizens of Ontario, for everyone in the province of Ontario.

If you are fair, if you believe in fairness, you have to stand up in this place and talk about this investment

which came from our government. We don't pick and choose like your government, like your leaders, like yourself, like the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound who wants to divide Ontario—create a different province and separate Toronto from Ontario. We don't play this game. We believe in equality in the province of Ontario. We believe in a fair system. That's why when we invest in the province of Ontario, we invest in every location because we believe strongly that all the people of Ontario have to live together. They have to work together in order to create a great and sustainable province.

Rural areas play a pivotal role in our communities and in this province. That's why we've given the respect and support we have. We have so many different ministries. The Ministry of the Environment to the Ministry of Infrastructure to the Ministry of Natural Resources—they spent a lot of money in northern Ontario to make a sustainable life for the people of these parts of the province.

Therefore, as a person who serves on this side of the House and who sees a lot of investment go out on a regular basis to support our infrastructure, I see that it's very hard to support the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke in his proposal, because you know what? We don't want to divide the province. We believe in one province—rural and cities. That's what we believe and that's why I'm going to go against this proposal.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has really demonstrated the divide that's occurring here. Clearly, on the Liberal side, they've been whipped to not support this. That's my impression, because they really haven't taken time to allow the rural members like Lou Rinaldi and Jeff Leal to speak. Yet, if I look at the bill or the information I've been provided, both the Peterborough county area as well as places like Cobourg and Port Hope, with Lou Rinaldi and Jeff Leal, do receive the federal money. But in that part of their rural ridings they don't get any of the provincial money. That's what this is about. It's about fairness

The real issue here is about fairness for all the people. I have a large rural component in my riding of Durham, and we know that their public transit system is simply roads and bridges. They don't have the luxury of going to the end of their laneway, in the case of rural areas, and catching the bus. It simply isn't a service that's available. How do they get to their appointments? How do they get to shops and other conveniences? This mentality from this government is so urban. They think everyone should live in a condominium, basically, and that they should go out the front door and catch the bus and live in piles. That's called intensification, and it eliminates rural Ontario. They don't support agriculture to any great extent as well, so it overflows. If you look deeper into what they're saying here, it's, "We're going to fund big cities and we're just going to completely ignore small-town Ontario.'

They're doing it with pharmacies. All the pharmacies in my riding today—in Orono and small communities,

they aren't going to have a pharmacy. They're going to have to go to the big city, and there's no transit to get them there. They're going to have to use their car, and now they're going to put tax on the gas. They're going to tax, with the new HST, gasoline. Rural Ontario is being completely ignored and hammered in this House daily, so I commend the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for giving a voice when this government is trying to silence rural Ontario.

I'm so disappointed, because the agricultural leadership has been here many times asking for a risk management plan to eliminate some of the red tape. We've supported it. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has made it very clear.

In my view, if I look at my riding, almost every community in Durham region receives the federal gas money. But then I look deeper down into the rural areas like Brock, Uxbridge, Scugog and parts of Clarington with no transit: not a single cent of provincial money.

Furthermore, they talk about equalizing the uploading and downloading in the municipal finances, and here's what they've done. They actually are going to be taking up some of the services to the provincial level to fund. I get that and I support that. But they're taking back the OMPF money, the Ontario municipal finance money, which used to go to the municipalities and offset some of their assessment weaknesses. Even in Toronto, if you look around, I think that whole Transit City plan—the questions have been asked to the ministers here every single day. They are yanking money out of Toronto transit; no question about it.

So I support the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for giving voice to rural Ontario, while on the government side they're obviously silencing the voice, because neither Lou nor Jeff have spoken on this bill, and it's disappointing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to have this opportunity this afternoon to speak in absolute support of my colleague the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke's private member's bill. I believe it's Bill 40, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to matching rebates of gasoline tax that the Minister provides to municipalities.

This isn't the first time that I've spoken in favour of this measure. I was trying to remember how many times the member has brought it back; I understand that this is the fourth incarnation of the bill. I think it's the same bill each time, is it not?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Essentially. It's not exactly.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Yes. But it's most important that he continues to show persistence on this issue, because he's absolutely right: Rural Ontario communities are being short-changed by this provincial government.

I remember the 2003 election campaign commitment, where the government promised to share some of the gas tax that people pay with the cities that have transit systems, and I remember being struck at the beginning:

How would that leave rural Ontario? Of course, it leaves rural Ontario out in the cold with respect to this particular program.

I've listened to some of the government members in response to Mr. Yakabuski's bill, and it would seem that they're probably going to vote it down again. I suspect they've been whipped to vote it down. We haven't heard from all the rural members who—many of them unfortunately aren't here this afternoon, but even the ones who are here haven't had, perhaps, the opportunity to get on the speakers' list.

The fact remains that the funding that the government has offered rural municipalities, in many cases joint federal-provincial funding, has been sporadic at best. Most municipalities in my riding see it as kind of like a lottery: You might win; you might not. Some communities put in multiple applications over a period of years, in some cases being denied two or three times in a row with no explanation as to why the funding was not forthcoming. So to suggest that some of the joint federal-provincial funding programs have been sufficient is completely bizarre, quite frankly.

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What municipalities tell me they need, and I believe this is true, is predictable funding so that they can plan for the future. I think of my municipalities in Wellington–Halton Hills. Obviously, all of them have infrastructure needs, and none of them have municipal transit systems because we're not a big city. The fact is, they need support from the provincial government or some of those projects cannot go ahead.

For example, in Centre Wellington township we have some 100 bridges, a huge number of which need repairs or need to be replaced, and there is absolutely no revenue stream coming from the provincial government that is predictable and sustainable to allow them to plan. However, the federal government, of course, has seen fit to share its gas tax with municipalities large and small, and I would suggest that that is the fair way to go.

The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke made reference to a number of supportive comments that he has received from municipalities and municipal leaders. I would like to draw attention to the fact that the mayor of Halton Hills—I know you made reference to it too-Mayor Rick Bonnette responded to this and gave us some factual information about the issue as it affects Halton Hills. He suggests that if the policy that Mr. Yakabuski is advocating were adopted, it would be possible that the town of Halton Hills would perhaps receive almost \$380,000 in new money, which could add approximately one kilometre of urban road to the pavement management program in that town, or perhaps 13 kilometres of surface treatment application to the rural system. So again, they understand what this money could go for and they believe that there is a need for fairness in this program. I want to thank Mayor Bonnette for expressing support for this particular bill.

When the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke started his remarks, he talked about his friend Walter

Hachborn, and even though it's somewhat unrelated to this bill, there is a relationship. I know Walter Hachborn too. He lives in St. Jacobs. I have a feeling Walter Hachborn would support this bill too, because as a long-time resident with an understanding of rural Ontario—all across Canada, as well as Woolwich township, certainly, where he is—

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I haven't had the chance to speak to him about this, but I have a feeling that he would understand the benefits of this bill for rural Ontario better than a lot of people, apparently, across the other side of the House. I want to add my voice of congratulations to him upon his retirement.

Again, I think this bill is one that is worthy of support. I must commend the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for continuing to advocate for this. He has shown incredible persistence in bringing this forward time and again. I admire that, certainly, and I've tried to do that with private members' bills in the past. I would encourage the government members who come from rural Ontario to give their vote some consideration and to think about how they are going to go home and talk to their constituents if they vote this down one more time. At some point, and it's going to be in about 18 months, those members are going to be called to account for some of their votes in this Legislature, and their constituents are not going to be very happy. They are going to find out on election night that their constituents have rendered their verdict.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has two minutes for his response.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank my colleagues from Nepean—Carleton, Durham and Wellington—Halton Hills for speaking, and also the member for Trinity—Spadina for expressing his support; also to the member for Guelph and the member for London—Fanshawe, even though they won't be supporting it.

They tried to frame this in some way that we're pitting rural against urban. In fact, it's your government that has done that. Your government has insisted that they will have a separate set of rules. When the member for Guelph talks about our implying that there are programs for rural Ontario, those programs also support urban Ontario, but it is this program that is specifically only for communities that have a public transportation system. And for the member for London-Fanshawe to start talking about highway projects that have happened in my riding, for goodness' sake, every one he talked about was a provincial highway. It's the responsibility of the provincial government to fix provincial highways. Good Lord, are you going to expect now those poor municipalities in my county and the rest of rural Ontario to start fixing the King's highways as well? How ridiculous was that?

That's what happens when you get your speaking notes from the Premier's office and you're told to go out there and just do as you're told. I wish there would be some independence and freedom on the part of members on that side of the House, that they could actually stand up for the people they represent. Where are the rural members from the Liberal caucus? Where are they speaking today? They will have to answer, during the month of September leading up to the election in 2011, why they continued to stand against their rural communities.

All they've asked for is a fair formula that the federal government has instituted for their purposes, and it should be shared with rural communities from the provincial perspective as well. That's all they're asking for, and you continue to say no.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time for this ballot item has expired. We'll vote on Mr. Yakabuski's item in about 100 minutes.

DEFIBRILLATOR ACCESS ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR L'ACCÈS AUX DÉFIBRILLATEURS

Mr. McMeekin moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 41, An Act to provide for defibrillators in premises accessed by members of the public / Projet de loi 41, Loi prévoyant la présence de défibrillateurs dans les lieux accessibles au public.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I've been singing the praises of this bill too much. I think it has affected me.

I cannot be more pleased to be here today to discuss this bill, known more concisely as the Defibrillator Access Act.

We have some very, very important people with us in the members' gallery today, and I'd like to take a couple of moments to properly introduce them. I'd like them to just rise and wave as I get to them.

From the Heart and Stroke Foundation, we have Marco Di Buono, director of research; Nadia Yee, government relations; and Joanne Cote, resuscitation manager—someone you want to know when you're in trouble.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation has been a valuable asset, as I will discuss later, in developing this legislation as well as many, many other AED—automated external defibrillator—programs around the province.

We also have great partners of the Heart and Stroke Foundation here today: Dr. Laurie Morrison, director of rescue and emergency physician and researcher at St. Michael's Hospital; and two EMS workers from York region, Steve Darling and Mike Jessop.

I'm very honoured to welcome people who know far too well how important heart health is, and specifically how important AEDs are. First, we have April Kawaguchi, who is the mother of a school-age child with a congenital heart defect. Welcome.

We're also pleased to have Dorothy, John and Cole McEachern, the mother, father and brother of the remarkable Chase McEachern, who is one of my heroes and, as you will soon hear, one who is an inspiration to us all. Welcome.

I also just got an email from my daughter saying, "When are you up, Dad? My roommates at college are watching." So I want to say hi to Whitney, and say, "Whitney, this is for you, honey," as well.

Let me start by giving you some facts that make this bill so darned important. Every year, approximately 7,000 Ontarians experience cardiac arrest. Of these 7,000, 85% occur in the home or in public places. That's almost 6,000 cardiac arrests in places where a hospital or ambulance may not be available for several precious minutes. For every minute that goes by for a victim of cardiac arrest where they do not receive defibrillation, their chances of survival drop between 7% and 10%. After 10 minutes, the chance of survival is less than 2%.

My colleagues with a medical background can likely speak more to this in a few moments, but let me help you to understand why AEDs are so key in conjunction with CPR. CPR keeps the blood circulating to body tissues to keep vital organs alive, but it takes defibrillation with an AED to resuscitate someone out of a cardiac arrest. A new study just released on April 16 by the Resuscitation Outcomes Consortium shows that when a person does receive CPR and defibrillation within a few moments, that person's survival rate increases by 75%. The same study shows that if patients who experienced cardiac arrest outside of a hospital did not receive a shock from an AED, 91% did not survive. That's a very scary number.

Today, Ontario has approximately 2,800 AEDs across the province, largely due to the wonderful work of the foundation—thank you—but we need more. This bill will require that AEDs be installed in designated premises where there is high traffic and where cardiac arrest most commonly occurs. It also compels owners of these premises to ensure that the defibrillator is being maintained and that properly trained individuals are available to use the AED. The terms are used interchangeably, by the way, Mr. Speaker, if you haven't gathered that already.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario has been absolutely instrumental in getting the AEDs we now have around the province. They have teamed up with municipalities and their EMS teams to start programs to have AEDs installed. I know my good friend Brent Browett from Hamilton EMS is eager to see this bill in place. He sent me some fascinating statistical information as to just how important the provision of these technical machines is.

Now it's our turn to team up with them again on AEDs. To borrow from a common mantra from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, we need to make AEDs as common as fire extinguishers. Great idea.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation also advocates the "chain of survival," a protocol that outlines the key links that have to be connected in order for a victim of cardiac

arrest to have the best chance of survival. The links in that chain include early access to emergency medical services by calling 911, early CPR, early defibrillation, and early advanced life support by medically trained paramedics or hospital staff. Too many places in Ontario are lacking a link in that chain: access to early defibrillation. This legislation, with your support, can change that.

In 2006, my colleague from Essex, Bruce Crozier, who wishes he could be here today but couldn't, introduced the Heart Defibrillator Use Civil Liability Act to protect people who use an AED in trying to save a life from civil liability. Our government took notice, and in 2007, the Chase McEachern Act was passed, doing that very thing.

The act was named after the extraordinary Chase McEachern, an 11-year-old boy who had a vision for Canada to have AEDs installed in all hockey arenas and schools. Tragically, Chase did not live to see his plan realized, but we can honour his legacy by doing everything we can today and in the future to ensure that Ontarians have access to this life-saving device. And we do know that AEDs are life-saving. Since 2006, over 20 lives have been saved because of quick access to an AED. That is more than 20 sons and daughters who are still with us today because of easy access to that device. Imagine how many more lives we can save.

The United States has legislation mandating AEDs in 17 states or roughly one third of the United States. In Nevada, that includes schools, sports centres, airports, county buildings and specific named buildings and universities. In New York, it is mandated that AEDs must be in schools, health clubs, public buildings and all institutions of that state and public places as defined in the New York City Administrative Code.

Ontario, I want to suggest respectfully, doesn't want to be left behind in this progressive movement in saving lives. In fact, today everybody in Canada—provincial health ministers and others right across the country—are watching, because we could be the first jurisdiction in Canada to act. Wouldn't that be a legacy?

In my home region, we learned via Santa Claus just how important AEDs are. Around Christmas 2008, a woman in Hamilton Place suffered cardiac arrest. Santa Claus was there, better known as Ken Mandeno, who was working as Santa Claus that day and used the available AED to save that woman's life. Ken had just been trained on how to use an AED two months prior. With more AEDs in public places around Ontario, we can all be Santa Claus, every single one of us. We can bring Christmas to Ontario early this year and save more lives with public access to AEDs.

On a personal note, I want to close by referencing just how fortunate I've been over my 20-some-odd years in public service. I managed to meet all kinds of incredible people and work with many, many incredible people, a number of whom are in this House. One individual I became friends with as a high school student was the late, great Reverend Dr. Tommy Douglas, who wrote in my

high school yearbook these words. I just want to quote them for the members of the Assembly. I always wondered if I'd ever get to use this in the Legislative Assembly, but it fits here remarkably well. He said this: "If instead of flowers we could plant one beautiful thought in the heart of a friend, that would be to give as the angels give." Members of the assembly, this is that beautiful thought. Today, we have an opportunity to give as the angels give.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank the member from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale for introducing Bill 41, an act to provide defibrillators in public places. I commend him for bringing forward such a worthwhile bill.

I can't speak to this bill about saving lives without thinking about a piece of legislation that I introduced about a year and a half ago. I'm referring to the Hawkins Gignac Act, which, if it hadn't been killed during prorogation, would have made a carbon monoxide detector mandatory in every home in Ontario.

But it's common knowledge today that heart disease is a leading cause of death in North America, and I commend the member for his efforts in reducing those statistics. When we debated a similar bill in 2006 brought forward by a member from Essex, our former colleague Laurie Scott, who was a nurse by training, pointed out that the odds of survival of an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest was just under 5%. Thousands of Canadian baby boomers are now turning 60. Today, we have an aging population and also an increasing level of obesity. Of course, Mr. Speaker, you wouldn't know about that, but I can vouch for that. So the more we can prepare ourselves, the better. Automated defibrillators are an important step in that preparation.

I'm proud to point out that while we are standing here debating—and sometimes even agreeing—people out there in my community are being active and working together to save lives. I want to recognize the many businesses, community groups and individuals who have helped expand defibrillators' availability in Oxford.

Just two months ago, the staff at East Side Mario's donated a defibrillator to the Woodstock Soccer Club, using the money raised from dress-down days. I commend the Frank Cowan foundation, based in Oxford county, for making a massive donation to the Heart and Stroke Foundation a few months ago to help support the Restart a Heart, Restart a Life program. A \$1-million cheque will be used to purchase and install 200 automated defibrillators in public places across the country over the next five years. Frank Cowan insurance is an Oxford success story, and I want to commend them for giving back to the community and for their dedication to saving lives in the entire community.

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The Oxford county public access defibrillators program is another example of how committed the people of Oxford are to helping each other. In only three years, the

program made it possible to place over 40 automated external defibrillators in public locations across Oxford county, and they're not stopping there. In just a few months, Oxford county paramedics are participating in the Becel Heart and Stroke Ride for Heart 2010 to help save lives. Their goal is to raise \$3,000 for the Oxford county public access defibrillators program.

However, placing defibrillators is not enough. An effective program requires continuous upgrades in training to ensure that staff members and volunteers are taught how to use the automated external defibrillators safely and effectively. This will be one of the challenges with implementing the bill. It is not only defibrillators that we need; we also have to ensure that they are properly used.

Another challenge that we will run into, of course, is the cost. The bill will require defibrillators in public places, which could include a number of places run by community organizations and non-profit organizations. While the goal of the legislation is good, we need to know who's going to pay and what impact that's going to have on the people who are paying.

In conclusion, that being said, I want to commend the member again for promoting the use of a lifesaving device. I've been touched by this issue in my own riding of Oxford. About a year ago, a six-year-old girl from Tillsonburg was honoured for saving her grandfather's life by performing CPR on him when he collapsed in his home. At the time, she was just five years old. This story highlights the importance of acting quickly when someone suffers sudden cardiac arrest. This is living proof that even young kids can save lives, and it is in our power to make it easier for people to act quickly by having automated defibrillators accessible in public places.

I applaud the member for taking a bold step forward to making our lives, hopefully, longer and better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'll be supporting this bill, quite obviously. I'm not sure how anybody could oppose it. I want to congratulate the member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale for bringing it here today. I want to also congratulate and thank the Heart and Stroke Foundation for their leadership on this issue. They're all here today.

Anything we can do by way of providing tools to people that are made available in public places to help when someone suffers cardiac arrest is a good thing. We think that the timely availability of a defibrillator used by someone who is also trained in CPR can mean the difference between life and death for that person suffering a heart attack. Anything that we can do, and should be doing, is good.

We can make this bill pass in no time. In my mind, there are no objectors here. There is not going to be anyone, individually or collectively as parties, who is going to be opposed to this. My sense is that if the government wants to make this happen, we can make it so and we can expedite that very quickly.

I know that some people have concerns around this bill. Right now, the powers to designate places that must have defibrillators are not spelled out in the bill. For some, this is an issue; for others it may not be. It is left to regulations to deal with this matter. Those of you who might be listening or watching or sitting here may not realize that regulations never see the light of day here in this Legislature. They're never debated in this House. The opposition MPPs are not allowed to debate regulations. We cannot even raise concerns, and have no role in crafting or raising objections with these regulations. They're voted on only by a couple of cabinet members who sit around the table, and then they're published in the gazette and they become law. That's the way it works.

It would be nice if we could address this particular issue in committee, and it would be good to hear from people who have the expertise, like the Heart and Stroke Foundation, to see whether or not they have suggestions about how we can concretize it in law.

The member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale pointed out that in New York, defibrillators are mandated in schools, airports, government buildings and colleges and universities. If they are mandated there—"mandated" means it's in law—why could we not do the same, rather than simply saying we're going to leave it in regulation? And it wasn't just New York that you mentioned, Minister. You mentioned Nevada, where they also list the places where they would be and, as in New York, mandated places.

The point is that we can spell it out in the bill as opposed to leaving it in regulation. That doesn't mean that, for me, if we don't spell it out, we would object to it. But it's a point that I raise and that other people have raised, so we might want to look at that. And if we bring it to committee, that clearly would solve it.

I want to say that we spend a great deal of money on treating disease. Every time there is this kind of bill that we debate, I often make reference to the fact that we could do a lot by way of prevention. We never really talk about prevention. We say, yes, the defibrillator is good, it can save lives, and if we train people it'll save a whole lot of folks who have strokes and so on. And yes, it's true. But not once do we as a House debate how prevention could save lives.

That's why I want to mention a couple of things that the member from Nickel Belt, my colleague, often speaks about, and that is that we could and we should have a more active health promotion ministry; that spending \$42 billion to treat rather than prevent is the wrong approach; and that we can keep people healthy by doing the right things.

So when the government cuts \$17 million out of the Smoke-Free Ontario campaign, including youth smoking prevention programs, we think that's a mistake. You might have a rationale for it, but it's a mistake. It's estimated that treating tobacco-related illnesses, cancers, heart attacks, strokes and respiratory illnesses costs the health care system \$1.7 billion a year. We know this.

And then you cut \$17 million. Why do you do that when you know the cost of not spending that little amount of money is going to make things worse? It makes no financial sense.

Seventeen months ago, the Legislature passed a bill to ban individually sold candy-flavoured cigarillos. I supported my colleague from Nickel Belt. We think it's a good idea. It was a good bill, and it passed. It even received royal assent. But it hasn't been enacted yet, 17 months later. I don't understand. We passed it; we all agreed; royal assent has been given, but it has not been enacted. Why, when we all agreed it's a good thing?

There's another one that my friend from Nickel Belt introduced, and that was a private member's bill, Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating, that would force fast-food chains to post the amount of calories on their menu boards, and ban trans fats. We think the good doctors, many of whom are Liberals, agree with this. I'm sure those who are not doctors, who are Liberals here today, agree with that too. Yet it was sent to a committee for committee hearings, and of course, it never saw the light of day. They just get strangulated there. They simply are in limbo. They never see life. They just get sent there after second reading because we all feel good about it, and they die. It doesn't make any sense.

So I say to the government members, and I know most of you agree with me, that's the sad thing about all this: We all seem to agree, yet we can't seem to do it.

I talk about the pillars of health promotion. As I read them, you'll all agree, yet we don't do it. They include healthy weight, including healthy eating. It's a big issue, yet we have a population that eats poorly and is overweight. We don't have enough gym teachers to be able to train young men and women to stay fit, to stay healthy.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Leave Kormos alone.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Kormos and many others. Even Kormos used to complain about himself many years ago, and he complains about his colleagues that he has to see on the other side on a daily basis.

Regular exercise: We don't exercise. I do my best, but I suspect most members in this Legislature don't exercise. Is that true?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I do.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Except for the Minister of Transportation, I know, because we talked—and the Minister of Health Promotion, God bless her. It's important. Others, I can't swear to; I don't know. We've got to exercise.

Another pillar is to quit smoking. I've got to admit I never liked cigarettes, ever in my life. I detest them. I have from time to time smoked cigars, I have to admit, but I do not inhale. I expel it as far as I can, as soon as it comes into my mouth. I know it's not a good thing.

The other one, of course, is managing stress. Yikes. Who knows how to manage stress in this place? But we've got to deal with it. Many criticize the Premier: "Did you read that document?" "Did you go there?" That man has many responsibilities. With the stress levels, I'm

surprised he doesn't have white hair yet, but he will. There is so much stress on that man, and he only earns 220,000 bucks; that's all he earns managing a \$118-billion budget, and we criticize and slap him around. I'm telling you, I don't know how he deals with that stress. But I like him. I try not to give him too much grief; I do my best.

These are the pillars, the prevention pillars of health promotion, and unless we deal with that, in everything else we do we're just going to keep spending more. People are going to say, "Oh, my God, health care is costing us \$45 billion and it's climbing. We've got to do something," and instead of doing this, we cut. We cut other programs, essential programs, such as the speech-language pathologists that we were dealing with, just one minor little thing. We don't have enough money for special education programs, with so many of our kids who come to our schools and need help. We don't have the specialists and we don't have the time to be able to do the IPRCs, the identification, placement and review committees, because we don't have the expertise, the time or the money.

We've got to spend money well. We can prevent many of the problems that make us ill, and rather than doing that, we keep on treating the illness that costs so much more.

Member from Ancaster, thank you for this bill; I'm going to be supporting it. You won't get any objections here. I think we can pass this today, even. You might want to be able to take it to committee for one day of hearings so that people can have their say, but once we've done that, I think it should become law quickly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm really pleased to enter into the debate on this bill brought forward by our colleague from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale. Of course, as a physician, someone who has promoted not only AEDs but bystander CPR in the community, I'm going to be supporting this bill.

Actually, I'd like to spend a little bit of time talking about what happened in the region of York. I'm delighted to see that some of our guests are here from York region EMS. We actually started a program in the regional municipality of York back in 2002-03. We had a unique opportunity in the health department in York region because we were bringing the public health department together with York region EMS. It formed the health department, along with long-term care.

To pick up on one of the points made by our colleague from Trinity-Spadina, we had the unique opportunity to bring the whole spectrum of health promotion, disease prevention and even amelioration of cardiac arrest under one umbrella, a program called Heart Alive, and the region of York, in fact, was very enthusiastically in favour of this program. We had tremendous assistance from the Heart and Stroke Foundation at that time.

Since 2003, we have installed 56 AEDs in 32 regional municipality of York workplaces, so that all health ser-

vices offices, long-term-care facilities, transportation and works offices, yards, water treatment facilities, courts, social service offices and other administrative facilities had an AED in close proximity. Of course the regional council chamber also, just as we have in this House, alluding to the stress issue, was very happy to have, in the York region admin building, an AED very closely situated to that chamber, which was sometimes the location of very stressful debates.

The member for Oxford alluded to the issue of training, and there is also the issue of maintaining AEDs. These are very, very crucial. The region of York approached this issue by asking for volunteers in each of these work sites, and we were delighted, because we in fact had employees who stepped forward to be trained in the use of the AEDs. So, in York region, we have a list of approximately 500 trained regional employees at all these 32 locations.

More recently, through a partnership with the Heart and Stroke Foundation and with funding from the Chase McEachern Tribute Fund, Heart Alive has been spreading the number of AEDs to the nine municipalities that compose the region of York. So, there has now been an addition of some 96 AEDs.

The message to all employees or to all people coming into our facilities in York region, though, continues to be: Let's prevent heart disease in the first place through good nutrition and, of course, through exercise. The AEDs are there as a potential last resort in that chain of survival that our colleague has referred to.

I did obtain one statistic that I thought was very useful: Of some 2,200 installed AEDs, we know that at least 22 have been used successfully. Some people may object on the issue of cost and that perhaps this is a rare event. No, these AEDs are being used; they're being used successfully. Of course, at the end of the day, we need to ask ourselves, "What price a life?" Life is too precious to ignore when we have mechanisms like AEDs that can prevent death and serious sequelae.

I will be supporting this bill with great enthusiasm.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon as well to express support for Bill 41, An Act to provide for defibrillators in premises accessed by members of the public. I want to commend the member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale for bringing this forward this afternoon. I know he has worked hard with members of the Heart and Stroke Foundation, and we welcome you as well for your support and presence here today. Thank you very much.

I'm proud to say that my wife, Lisa, who is a teacher at James McQueen Public School, is organizing a Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser for the Heart and Stroke Foundation this afternoon at that school. She has done that for a number of years. Last year, they raised about \$3,100, she told me, and they're hoping to do as well this year. I'm very proud of her, obviously.

I want to speak very briefly to this bill, because I know that my colleague has a lot to say about this too.

The fact is, this is a bill that should be supported in principle. I think the member would be amenable to sending it to committee. I know there is an opportunity at the standing committee for further discussion, and we would all welcome that opportunity.

Last Friday, I had a chance to attend an important event in Guelph, where we announced that there would be 11 automated external defibrillators installed at all Wellington county high schools and at the Guelph campus of Conestoga College.

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I had a chance to speak at that and to commend the various sponsors, Transamerica Life Canada, Reliance Home Comfort, the Gala Royale and the other sponsors in Guelph and Wellington county who have assisted in establishing this program for our area.

It was an exciting thing to be part of, and I'm very pleased to express support for the member's bill. I think that, in principle, this is something that we need to pursue as a province. Certainly the member has pointed out that approximately 7,000 Ontarians will experience cardiac arrest, with up to 85% of those occurring at home or in public places. I think every family in Ontario has been affected and touched by a sudden cardiac arrest incident with a family member, my family being one of them. If we can save a life, obviously we would want to do everything we can towards that objective.

Again, I commend the member for bringing forward this legislation this afternoon, and I encourage all members to give consideration to supporting it at second reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Of course, I would also like to commend my colleague, MPP McMeekin from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, for bringing forth this particular piece of legislation for diffusing defibrillators across the province of Ontario in public spaces.

I'd also like to lend a voice, not only as a physician but as a legislator here, to the Heart and Stroke Foundation for their remarkable work, not only in publicizing and disseminating best practices on a whole range of issues—what I would call global cardiovascular risk management—but in particular for having enlightened souls such as Laura Syron, who is one of my liaisons, as I've had in various guises the opportunity to present on behalf of the Heart and Stroke Foundation, and in particular their attention to ethnicity as a new cardiovascular risk factor, the fact that certain races, certain cultural groups may be more predisposed to having heart attacks and strokes and so on. So I'd like to commend them.

As well, I'd like to thank MPP McMeekin, not only for today's bill but also for his support last week of my own private member's bill. It seems to be medical week, supporting the idea that the government of Ontario should initiate programs to publicize the Ontario vital stats resolution; basically, that Ontarians should know their numbers, whether it's cholesterol, sugar, waist

measurement and so on, and a whole range of other indices or measures so that physicians, the broader public and the Heart and Stroke Foundation can track the onset of illness over time.

As MPP McMeekin has very rightly brought to our attention, cardiovascular disease remains a very prevalent, important and widespread condition. We, as doctors, know that you do not have to wait until you reach that mythical middle age, whatever that number happens to be these days, whether it's 40, 45, 50 or beyond. Unfortunately, we're seeing these conditions, as the Heart and Stroke Foundation folks will know, in much younger patients. We're now even sending 27year-olds and 33-year-olds for bypass operations. If we can, at point source in various public facilities such as schools, universities, colleges and so on, actually allow people to have the opportunity to benefit not only from on-site CPR, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or the actual automated external defibrillator machines, that's very important.

I think it's just a point to be made that the brain, once it starts to lack blood supply, blood oxygen, essentially dies within about four minutes' time. Of course, if individuals are already predisposed, if their arteries are already a little bit on the rusted side, kind of obstructed or blocked, then the damage can be terrifying, can be wholesale. It can lead to sudden cardiac death and so on. This idea of having patients who develop, essentially, sudden cardiac arrest, or as we would say, defibrillation, when the heart doesn't actually contract as it should, sending, as it should, as a pump, blood to the whole body—this is basically a kick-start, a reboot, a reset, a reelectrification of the heart. To be able to now, as a legislator, deal not only with the body politic but also the body human—I would certainly support this particular resolution.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I am pleased to speak in favour of Bill 41 and speak a little bit—actually, brag a little bit—about what we're doing in my community of Brampton on this issue.

Brampton's defibrillation program was established back in 1995 as a co-operative effort between Brampton Fire and Emergency Services and Peel Regional Paramedic Services. The program provides ventricular defibrillation to patients suffering from cardiac arrest during pre-hospital emergency care. The defibrillator program is overseen by Dr. Sheldon Cheskes, the medical director of the Sunnybrook-Osler Centre for Prehospital Care.

In Brampton, our firefighters receive two days of CPR and defibrillation training during their recruitment. They conduct CPR and defibrillator training as part of their monthly training, and they must be recertified annually. Currently, Brampton Fire and Emergency Services and Peel Regional Paramedic Services are involved in the Resuscitation Outcomes Consortium study. This is a North-America-wide study involving the collection of

data from incidents involving the use of AEDs to determine which treatments best help people with cardiac arrest or severe injury, including new drugs, tools and techniques. The odds are four times greater if someone performs CPR immediately, when combined with early defibrillation. AEDs can increase the survival rates to 50% or more if they are delivered in the first few minutes.

Back in 2004, members of my Royal Canadian Legion branch 15, the poppy committee, the chairman, Bill Burrell, and vice-chair George "Potsy" Burrows presented a cheque to help pay for two new defibrillators to be used by the Peel regional marine unit. Then in August 2004, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, in partnership with the Ministry of Health Promotion and Scotiabank, made it possible to purchase and install 10 automatic external defibrillators to be placed in the city of Brampton. The AEDs were installed in high-traffic public sites, collected in conjunction with the city of Brampton's emergency medical services.

Since I have been in this Legislature, the Ministry of Health Promotion has provided \$3 million to bring 1,000 AEDs to public facilities in communities throughout Ontario to help save lives. Placing these devices in high-traffic public facilities make sense, because we know that roughly 17% to 20% of cardiac arrests happen outside the home. In addition to intervening with cardiopulmonary resuscitation—CPR—the defibrillators are the only definitive treatment for sudden cardiac arrest.

I am pleased to support the work of my colleague from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale, and I'm very happy to support this bill. He has worked very hard to bring everybody together on something that we believe will promote health and safety for Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Frank Klees: I'm pleased to join in the debate, and I want to thank our colleague Mr. McMeekin for bringing this bill forward. I want to, at the outset, say that I certainly will be supporting this bill, amongst other reasons because I received a communication from a friend and regional councillor, John Taylor, in Newmarket. I just want to read into the record his note to me.

"I am writing to you today to urge you to support Bill 41, the Defibrillator Access Act, 2010, by voting in its favour on May 6, 2010. As volunteer president of Heart and Stroke York North, I was extremely impressed and gratified to learn that MPP Ted McMeekin had introduced this bill, which would make Ontario a leader in Canada with respect to public access defibrillators. The legislation has the potential to save countless lives across Ontario. With your help, the legislation will be passed and AEDs (automated external defibrillators) will become as commonplace as fire extinguishers in Ontario—and they will save lives!"

For the record, to John Taylor, I certainly will be voting in favour of this.

I want to take this opportunity as well to welcome to Queen's Park, from York region, EMS representatives Steve Darling and Mike Jessop. Thank you for joining us, and thank you for the good work that you do.

I want as well to extend our appreciation to the Heart and Stroke Foundation—not just as an organization but as individual volunteers, those of you who are working full-time in this great calling. Thank you for your dedication to this calling.

I want to thank the many thousands of volunteers across this province who work through the Heart and Stroke Foundation to do what they do. I'm sure that this was a great encouragement to our colleague for bringing this forward.

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I'm proud, as well, of York region, which I believe, unless the numbers have changed, is actually a leader in Ontario in placing defibrillators throughout our entire region.

If, in fact, this bill passes, which I trust it will, we will be leaders not only in Canada but throughout North America, and that's how it should be.

I want to also pay tribute today to Chase McEachern for his leadership and for the support that he gave this initiative through his own life—we honour that life and his family; as well, Brandon Koskitalo, a 14-year-old student who made his way here in March to encourage MPPs to take this initiative on.

I want to make this appeal. We all know of private members' bills that we have supported here in principle on second reading. As the previous speaker indicated, sometimes we get approval in principle, we can go from this place and we have approval from the members here for second reading, and then it either goes into committee—and if it goes there—

Mr. John Yakabuski: It dies.

Mr. Frank Klees: It dies, and we never have it back—or it comes back. I had one of those bills where it came back for third reading, was approved for a third reading, but was never proclaimed. So I want to make this recommendation, and I appeal to all members of the House from all parties: Let's not let that happen here. I'd like to ask for unanimous consent, Speaker, that not only would we approve here in principle for second reading, but that we would then come back and have third reading immediately so that this bill doesn't have to go through that additional step. And let me just say this, before the Clerk gives you advice that that can't be done: Let's do the right thing here. Let's do it because we're members of the Legislature and we'll take on that responsibility and pass this bill today without any further complications.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Just a reminder that you can't ask for unanimous consent of that nature during private members' public business, but once the item is dealt with and voted on, you can then ask for it to be ordered for further reading.

Mr. Frank Klees: On a point of order, Speaker: I just want to say that that is my intention; that following the vote for second reading, I will in fact be asking for

unanimous consent to have third reading on this bill immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. McMeekin.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I'm intrigued with the proposal. I'm not sure of all the ins and outs, but I'm sure there are people who can adjudicate that far better than I can.

At the outset, I want to just give thanks to the member from Oxford—and I think I actually have about three minutes—for his complimentary references, particularly to the Heart and Stroke Foundation; to the member from Trinity–Spadina for some of his cogent points about some more work that may need to be done on the bill; to the member from Oak Ridges–Markham for sharing her experiences, along with, of course, the member from Wellington–Halton Hills; to the member from Etobicoke North, the good doctor, who always adds a clever voice to important items; to my good friend the Minister of Natural Resources; and my good buddy the member from Newmarket–Aurora. I want to thank everybody for their time and for what I sense is their enthusiastic support of this bill. You almost wonder why it took so long.

I want to say a personal word of thanks again to Heart and Stroke Foundation and to our special guests today. The simple truth of the matter is that they did a lot of work preparing this legislation. I think they would acknowledge that there is probably some more discussion that we need to have around indicating what places AEDs would go into.

I want to just say in passing that to make this happen is going to be all about partnership. Partnership is what we can achieve together that we can't achieve apart. I think the Heart and Stroke Foundation has been absolutely instrumental in not only placing AEDs in appropriate facilities but also in the ongoing training and upgrading that is needed to ensure that people know how to operate those machines.

My hope, frankly, is that, consistent with the spirit of my good friend from Newmarket-Aurora, the government might choose to embrace this as government policy. I'm not in quite the same position to talk to those terms as perhaps in the past, but this makes eminent sense. I think everybody around this chamber understands that.

It's time to move forward. At the risk of sounding cheesy, I think that today we are all saying, "Defibrillation for the nation." Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): For those visiting in the gallery and those watching at home, we'll vote on Mr. McMeekin's ballot item in about 50 minutes.

TRUTH IN GOVERNMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA VÉRITÉ AU SEIN DU GOUVERNEMENT

Ms. MacLeod moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act to provide for the disclosure of financial information in the public sector / Projet de loi

39, Loi prévoyant la divulgation de renseignements financiers dans le secteur public.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to thank my honourable colleagues who are here to debate this today. The Truth in Government Act, which we are debating, contains a series of taxpayer protection measures that will expand freedom of information across government and ensure disclosure of hospitality expenses, job reclassifications, and contracts and contributions over \$10,000 at public sector bodies. I'm seeking all-party support, because this is a sensible plan that would cost nothing to adopt today and can easily be done with information that the government already possesses.

Ontarians work hard for their families, and work hard so that they can enjoy their life in this great province. Yet for too long Ontarians have experienced a lack of respect for their hard-earned tax dollars that they send government at Queen's Park, here in Toronto. In particular, over the last few years we've seen major spending scandals. Under the McGuinty Liberals, for example, we have seen scandals at eHealth Ontario, Ontario Lottery and Gaming, Cancer Care Ontario, the WSIB and various LHINs, to name but a few.

Had the Truth in Government Act been in place during those scandals, many of the spending abuses that actually occurred would never have happened. That is why I expect all-party support to endorse these accountability measures today.

This kind of legislation is long overdue. Ontarians have now been subjected to seven years of a Liberal government that has lacked accountability and transparency; a Liberal government that cannot control its spending, as evidenced by a \$21-billion deficit this year alone; and a Liberal government that remains unconcerned with scandal after scandal that continue to plague the Premier's office and cabinet officials.

Alternatively, the PC caucus's plan is a five-point plan on truth in government, which includes five robust measures that we can do today. Let me brief you on those.

The first is to expand the scope of freedom of information. This would ensure that all public sector bodies would allow access to details on how public money is spent. Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner has repeatedly called for this in every single annual report since 2004. The Ontario Hospital Association also agrees, and they said that expanding FOI powers to cover hospitals "can only help bolster public trust and confidence in hospitals and the broader public service."

Second, we'd like to require full proactive disclosure of all contracts over \$10,000 at all public sector bodies on a website quarterly. This measure would deter excesses in government and give taxpayers access to whether contracts were delivered on time and on budget. This is being done right now at our national level.

Third, the act would require full proactive disclosure of travel and hospitality expenses in all public sector bodies. This measure would expose organizations like the LHINs and also allow public opinion and public scrutiny to serve as a deterrent to waste across government. Let me give you an example. In this Legislature, we have raised time and again some of the abuses that we've seen. We've seen Cancer Care Ontario spend lots of money on cupcakes for a going away party. We've seen Steve Mahoney, at the WSIB, purchase a GPS in Florida and charge that back to the taxpayers. We have seen this time and again. This particular measure would eliminate that from happening.

Fourth, the act would require full proactive disclosure of grants and contributions over \$10,000 at all public sector bodies. Had this measure been in place in 2006 at the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration's office, we would not have needed the Auditor General's investigation to uncover \$1 million in public money going to a

cricket club that had only requested \$150,000.

Finally, it would require full proactive disclosure of all public sector reclassifications. We have seen the sunshine list continually grow—by 10,000 people in the last year alone. It has tripled since the McGuinty Liberals have taken office. We have seen an excessive, bloated and—I dare say—inflated, grossly inflated, growth of the public sector. We must ensure that the public sector meets the realities of the private sector.

These are practical solutions that can be implemented, as I said, today, with no cost. As I noted previously, this is about Ontarians feeling like their tax dollars are being spent responsibly and towards services that they use, that they expect and that they need from their own government rather than going to government-friendly consultants.

Had these crucial measures been implemented, they would have prevented these recent scandals as I've mentioned, because under the McGuinty Liberals alone, there has been a total of \$3.6 billion in wasted spending, including the recent eHealth scandal, the Windsor Energy Centre, WSIB, MPAC, OLG, Mike Colle's cricket club fiasco, Cancer Care Ontario, the Samsung deal, Ontario Works, the ODSP and the HST tax collector scandals, and the list continues.

But it's not just us in the Progressive Conservative Party who are advocating for this bill, the Truth in Government Act. Numerous Ontarians also believe that the province of Ontario needs legislation to protect our tax dollars.

Kevin Gaudet of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation says, "This bill will help shed light on government spending. It mirrors some mechanisms already in place at the federal level and only brings Ontario spending up to their level. Taxpayers should be able to know easily how their tax dollars are being spent by government. This bill helps to accomplish that goal."

Peter Coleman, the president of the National Citizens Coalition, states, "The NCC has always stood for transparency and value for hardworking taxpayers. We fully support this bill and hope that it becomes law and brings back honesty and stops the rampant waste and scandal that seems to be the norm under the McGuinty government"

As I mentioned earlier, Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner has repeatedly called to expand freedom-of-information access to all agencies, boards and commissions in the province of Ontario in every annual report since 2004.

The Ontario Hospital Association, representing their sector, has also called on the McGuinty Liberals to extend FOI legislation to hospitals. They say, and I have used the quote earlier but I'm going to use it again because it's so important, "Ontario's hospitals value their communities' confidence and trust, and our proposal to have [the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act] apply to our sector can only help bolster public trust and confidence in hospitals and the broader public sector."

Finally, from one of the most notable guardians of the public trust, Ontario Ombudsman André Marin, who has been a watchdog in holding the government to account: He has also called for further transparency in government. He has called on the government for a comprehensive governance framework for ABCs, which are our agencies, boards and commissions. They need to be "open ... as part of a principled approach to accountability," and he called on the government for "a comprehensive ... governance framework for ABCs that accommodates their differences while ensuring value for taxpayers."

The conclusion in the Ombudsman's report is one of importance, and I believe it speaks to the legislation before us. He concludes his report by saying, "The failure of an ABC is perceived as a failure of government ... and that ultimately every ABC understands one thing: They exist to serve the citizens of Ontario, not as autonomous creatures, free to roam as they would. They must be kept on an appropriate tether to ensure that they serve, rather than destroy, the interests of their real master—the people of Ontario."

The PC caucus agrees, and that is exactly what we are trying to accomplish here today. We want to ensure that the people of Ontario trust their government and to ensure that the people of Ontario get value for their tax dollars. The Truth in Government Act, if passed, will hold anyone spending public money to a higher standard of behaviour. These accountability measures would ensure that spending scandals would end at the 600-plus agencies, boards and commissions in our province. Our constituents, in my opinion, deserve to have confidence that their government and their government officials are doing what is in their best interests and not what is in the best interests of their particular political masters or stakeholders.

The Truth in Government Act can be legislated today. It started as a concept of some very intelligent people in the Progressive Conservative Party. I want to take this opportunity to thank those who helped draft and shape

this legislation. I'd like to thank, in PC leader Tim Hudak's office, Ian Robertson, Clark Savoline, David Tarrant and Nick Koolsbergen. They each gave their time and talent to ensure that this bill made it to the floor of the Ontario Legislature. In addition, I would like to thank Michael Wood from legislative counsel, who provided me with efficient and professional support. I'd like to thank my own staff, Jad Haffar, who is in the gallery, for his work on communications. Most of all, I would like to say a special thank you to Megan Boyle, my legislative assistant, who ushered this private member's bill through the various stages of the legislative and administrative processes. I want to thank you very much.

They did this because they believe in the work that they do. They believe that Ontario can lead again, because in Ontario, as in every other part of this great nation, the principle of responsible government means that the Premier and his cabinet are directly accountable to the elected members of this Ontario Legislature and ultimately to the people of this province. It is a noble principle, one that is over 160 years old on Canadian soil—older than our country itself. It was first defended by Joseph Howe in Halifax in 1848, who once said, "My public life is before you; and I know you will believe me when I say that when I sit down in solitude to the labours of my profession, the only questions I ask myself are: What is right? What is just? What is for the public good?"

To those questions, I answer: Truth in government—it is right. Truth in government—it is just. Truth in government—it is for the public good. It can be done. "Truth in government" has a nice right to it.

I look forward to an engaging debate and to all members of this assembly supporting truth in government so that we can ensure that Ontario does lead again for the taxpayers of this province, who work hard to make a living and feed their children and produce great results for our society.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm going to support this bill. I am really not quite sure whether this is the right way to get to transparency issues, controls on spending, but it certainly deserves to have a hearing. It would be great to have people come to speak to this particular bill and talk about how indeed we control waste in government, because there is always some waste that we can and must control.

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One of the saddest things for me is that there are a whole lot of people who don't trust our government or any government, who don't trust politicians of any political stripe. In fact, I've canvassed many people who think we are all the same. My sense is that this experience is no different when Liberal members canvass their constituents or when Tory members canvass theirs. Many of them not only mistrust politicians; they hate politicians—and I use that word because I feel it many a time as I knock on doors. Many constituents believe that

we have a pension, in spite of the fact that I might tell them we don't. Many of them believe that we line our pockets, whether it's true or not, whether it's unbelievably false—and even if you tell them so, they still believe that somehow people take money and politicians know how to steal money, how to line their own pockets. Maybe people believe a whole lot of things that may not be true. But if they believe it, it means in their mind it's absolutely true. If they feel it viscerally, it must be true intellectually.

I'm often very, very cautious about some things as I do them in politics because I don't want to fuel those negative attitudes that people have about politics and politicians. There are some things we do in this Legislature that don't make it any better for us as politicians. I find it regrettable that many politicians of all political stripes don't realize, as they're doing it, that they are making the lives of politicians even worse. But that's the way it goes. That's what we have to deal with.

Today we're dealing with a bill called the Truth in Government Act. What this bill does is expand the scope of the Freedom of Information Act to allow public sector bodies to provide more access and to allow citizens—indeed, as the Tories would like to say, the taxpayers—to get access to all sorts of information.

This is a bill that can be helpful, because governments are very secretive. It's not just Liberal governments that are secretive; NDP and Conservative governments were secretive. We all tend to do it, and it's possible that some are worse than others. It is true that governments and government bodies can be very, very secretive, and you, Minister, would know that. I have been in cabinet to understand it, and the Tories have been in cabinet to understand it. Anything we can do to provide more information to the public is good for democracy, and in that regard I support this.

There is a long and sorry history of various public offices stonewalling requests for information; running every request to the maximum time limits as we go after access for information from the Freedom of Information Act; providing partial information, as opposed to the adequate information that one looks for; and yes indeed, obstructing access for as long as possible. Some public offices are notorious for denying every access request.

Providing more access may not do anything to get better or quicker access to information. So while I say I support the bill, will it give us the information that we ask for and that citizens are entitled to when they make that request? I'm not sure it will. As useful as it is to try to get information, to make us more transparent and accountable, whether in the end we're going to get it, I don't know. That's why I am a big supporter of the Ombudsman. Like the member from Nepean—Carleton said, this Ombudsman has made this particular government—it could be a different government in place; Marin would make that government accountable too. Whatever government is in power, Marin would, by his style, make governments accountable, and I think it's good. While political parties are wary of accountability and transpar-

ency, I am not. I think it's good for citizens. It's good for

democracy to have people like that.

I'm a big supporter of Jim McCarter, our auditor in this province. He does an amazing job. He gets to the heart of the problem. Why we don't give him the extra power to get into all boards, agencies and commissions, I don't know. At the moment, we only have access to 20% to 25% of boards, agencies and commissions. Wouldn't it be nice to open it up a little bit? Wouldn't it be nice to bring all our boards, agencies and commissions under the careful watch of the Auditor General? It would be good.

Why do we fear it so much? Why do we resist it so much? I know why. If you're in government, you're afraid, because everything you open up that beats you up is another kick in the teeth: "Man, oh man, can we survive that one?" I know that. It would be good for citizens. It would be good for democracy. It would be good as a way of controlling some of the waste that indeed goes on in government. But we're afraid to deal with it, and all governments have been afraid to do it. I say this with all due respect and experience.

The disclosure of hospitality expenses, okay; job reclassifications, yes; contracts, okay; grants and contributions over \$10,000 on all public sector bodies, that's good. But all of that could be included in the powers of the Auditor General, and we could get to it in the same way. In fact, I argue that we might be able to do a better job of it; not to undermine the bill presented by the member from Nepean-Carleton, but as a way of saying that the Auditor General might be able to get to the heart of the matter more clearly and more decisively than expanding the scope of the freedom of information act. It's just two ways of getting at it. That's good. We're proposing that we could expand the powers of the Auditor General.

I propose that we expand the powers of the Ombudsman to the MUSH sector: to hospitals, elementary and secondary schools, and universities. It would be good for all you fine Liberals. You all want the same thing we do. And by the way, if you lose the election and some other government gets there, you will have done a good thing for citizens if you're out of power. It's good for you. You never know, you may not last another term. Okay, you might last four more years, but eventually they're going to kick you out and someone else is going to be there. If that is true, do yourselves a favour for the next time, for your constituents, for all Ontarians. You just have to have a little bit of—

Mr. Bob Delaney: How long have you been around, Rosie?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: How long have I been around? How long have you been around?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I asked you first.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: We've been around a long time. That's why I'm trying to help these junior guys from—where are you here?—Mississauga—Streetsville. I'm just trying to help you. That's all.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Rosie, you're assuming he's in

his own seat.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: He is there, yes. He likes to sit in his own seat, John.

You don't have to take my advice or my opinion; most of you reject them anyway. But I'm just telling you, you will lose an election. It may not be this one—we might have a minority government, who knows?—but soon enough you'll be out, and then you'll say, "Man, I wish we had passed that, because now we've got another government, and we're going to have to fight them in the same way that they were fighting us." As soon as another party goes there, the opposition party is going to come and say the same thing. You'll be introducing the same bills, and you'll regret it. You'll say, "I wish we had done it." It's very comical, really. It really is comical. As the seats change, the questions are no different.

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Mr. John Yakabuski: Maybe the member from Mississauga-Streetsville won't be here when the government changes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You don't know, do you? He doesn't even know. You're quite right. Think about the fact that you may not be here at all, not just as a government, but you individually as members. So I don't know. I'm just trying to be helpful, as best as I can.

Member from Nepean-Carleton, I'm going to support your motion. I think it gets to how we spend and how we control spending in general. I was proposing the Auditor General might get to it a little more effectively, but I'm going to support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further

debate?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I appreciate the opportunity to address this bill. Transparency of government and the protection of public funds are crucial issues that all members should be concerned with. But I want to ask the other side, how come they didn't support the bill that we introduced? Some of the members didn't even show up to vote for it. If they were so concerned about it, they should have at least taken the liberty to come here, talk about it and also support the bill that we proposed. While Bill 39 seeks to accomplish broad goals, the Ontario government has already made the legislation and policy changes to increase transparency in the areas of expense disclosure and procurement and to expand freedom of information across the government.

Let me just about talk about a few areas. For the expenses, Bill 39 seeks the disclosure of travel and hospitality expenses from public bodies, but as you know, Speaker, this government has just recently passed legislation which addresses that very issue in a comprehensive and an effective manner. The Public Sector Expenses Review Act, 2009, along with the revised travel, meal and hospitality expenses directive that followed it, implemented significant accountability measures to ensure taxpayer dollars are used effectively.

Senior officials of the 22 largest public agencies in the province must now face the same level of accountability as cabinet ministers and political staff under the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review

and Accountability Act. Since April 1, 2010, the expenses of cabinet ministers, political staff, senior management in the Ontario public service, senior executives and the top five expense claimants at Ontario's 22 largest agencies have been subject to posting on a publicly accessible website. This will allow Ontarians to draw their own conclusions about the expenses of their public servants and officials. That has already been done.

This government has also made wide-ranging improvements in employee education about expenses and accountability. All public employees, whether they are elected, hired or appointed, have always been required to act responsibly with the public money that is entrusted to them. The new requirements we brought in have clarified the rules and allow for better adherence to them. Based on these legislative and policy changes, it is clear that this government has already taken the appropriate steps to improve transparency and internal controls on expenses.

On the procurement side, Bill 39 proposes to implement disclosure requirements on goods and services contracts involving a public body. Once again, I have to say to the member for Nepean–Carleton that you are a little bit too late. Our government has moved decisively to introduce greater accountability and transparency in the area of procurement. Our procurement policies ensure value for money by implementing open, fair and transparent competitive processes.

Interjection.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: If you'd care to listen, you might learn something. They contribute to the greatest degree of transparency and accountability in government procurement in Ontario's history.

Ontario's procurement policy framework is set out in the July 2009 procurement directives. It provides direction on mandatory procurement requirements such as planning, supply source, procurement methods, approvals processes and related policies. It also mandates, for the first time ever, that vendors who participate in the competitive procurement process must be offered a debriefing to ensure openness.

This directive applies to all ministries, agencies and non-classified entities, including the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, Hydro One, Ontario Power Generation, Infrastructure Ontario and the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. All ministries and agencies are now required to publicly post contract award notifications for all acquisitions of goods over \$25,000 and all services over \$100,000. When the party of the member opposite was in government, only the procurement of goods valued at or above \$100,000 had to be posted.

The procurement-related proposals in Bill 39 would be of little benefit. The policy changes brought about by our government have made reporting requirements under the current procurement framework far more fulsome and transparent.

Bill 39 also proposes to expand the reach of freedom of information requests. This is something that we on this

side of the House have been working diligently to accomplish. Access to information is of crucial importance to the transparent operations of the government. The Information and Privacy Commissioner has stated that an 80% compliance for requests is a good benchmark, and in 2009 our government had an 87.6% compliance rate within 30 days and 99.4% overall compliance.

Unlike the previous Tory government, we have brought a number of entities under the freedom of information act, such as publicly funded universities, Hydro One, Ontario Power Generation and local public utilities. Ontario hospitals are accessible under their own freedom of information and privacy legislation. Furthermore, we are in continuous consultation to identify additional opportunities to expand the coverage of freedom of information policy. We have also worked to ensure that there is an efficient and effective process in place to address FOI requests, and I'm proud to inform this House that the public is receiving the information it asks for in a timely manner. In the past two reporting years, 2007 and 2008, this government has achieved its best-ever performance in replying to FOI requests within legislated time periods.

The wide range of legislative and policy frameworks we have undertaken, a few of which I have mentioned today, have done a great deal to protect taxpayers' money and make the Ontario government more transparent. By virtue of all the measures we put in place last fall, Bill 39 is simply not necessary at this time. I cannot support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: I first want to commend the member from Nepean-Carleton for bringing in a very important bill, the Truth in Government Act.

Just in the last few minutes I was listening to the Minister of Government Services, who really oversees pretty well all of the contract obligations of the province of Ontario. I think our party has been spending an inordinate amount of money on the freedom-of-information requests from that government to find out some of the contracts that have indeed been signed. In fact, there was a question asked by our transportation critic, Mr. Klees, today with respect to the issues of the service centres on Highway 401, specifically at Mallorytown.

I just want to put on the record that the bill itself—there's a bit of background. I want to commend Lisa MacLeod's staff for providing these facts. A total of \$3.6 billion has been wasted during McGuinty's reign so far: the eHealth scandal, which we all know the auditor uncovered, an expense of \$1 billion; the Windsor Energy Centre, which has been brought up here in the House; the WSIB scandals, for the chair and others; the MPAC scandal; Ontario Lottery and Gaming; Cancer Care Ontario; the \$7-billion Samsung deal; Ontario Works; the local health integration networks; and the HST that we're now finding out is a tax grab of something in excess of \$5 billion.

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But we should always remember it all started with the health scandal. The Premier, in 2003, promised he wouldn't raise taxes and then the first thing he did was raise the health tax. He tried to call it a premium so that it wasn't a tax. That's the history we're dealing with, and it's this lack of accountability and transparency.

A little bit more history: On June 17, 2009, he promised to end the sole-source contracting and expose untendered contracts with Casino Niagara, the Windsor Energy Centre and the LHINs again. Then, in September of the same year—2009—he broke promises to force Ontario agencies, boards and commissions to post their expenses and was undermined by the fact that there were 580 different agencies that still remain exempt today.

Dalton McGuinty, on October 19, 2009, promised to stop hiding on the sunshine list the six-figure salaries of health officials. In fact, he did break his own rule again by hiding the salaries of the local health integration networks. In fact, in that context, the Deputy Minister of Health had to resign because his salary was posted in two different areas. So it breaches the culture of entitlement, and the bill, thanks to the member's thoroughness, has five principles to expose and search out some of this lack of openness and accountability.

I think some of the other members in our caucus want to speak on it, but I'm going to mention a couple. They aren't mentioned here. I think it's in the context of what some of the government members are saying. We want the Ontario Ombudsman, Mr. Marin, to have oversight of a lot of the agencies—very thorough, highly regarded—and what's happening? I think the government is actually firing Mr. Marin. I think he's being dismissed. There's a person that I think they shake when he walks by.

The Auditor General is another highly regarded, independent officer of the Legislature whose role I think should be expanded and strengthened, and I would support that.

But more importantly—and I'm going to conclude on this remark—my critic file is the Minister of Government Services, which is difficult to put an absolute definition on. It's not like the Minister of Health or the Minister of Energy or the Minister of Transportation, which are quite specific responsibilities. All the contracts go through there. Stay tuned, because the estimates committee has picked this ministry as the number one ministry to review expenditures.

They have a very large budget. They sign all the contracts that give all this money away to these Liberal-friendly consulting firms. But more importantly, starting on Tuesday, May 11, the minister is now on notice that he'll be before the committee and will be grilled relentlessly on some of this.

They wanted us as the opposition to spend \$10,000 to get some of this information. I put you on notice now, Minister, that we're going to be after the truth. This bill is going to be the very foundation of what we want this government to be responsible and more accountable for. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'm pleased to join the debate on this bill, although I think it is perhaps inaccurately named. Let's propose what the bill actually proposes to enact as a name. Let's suggest that it might be called an act to promote red tape creation, reckless spending and bureaucratic bloat.

This bill is a bait-and-switch measure that uses the rhetoric of outrage to, in effect, create a monstrous, paper-shuffling, red-tape-creating, money-gobbling bureaucracy that will not create a single private sector job. It won't provide a single public service, it won't build a school, it won't teach a child, it won't cure a patient, it won't pave a road, it won't generate a kilowatt hour of electricity and it won't assist the vulnerable Ontarian. In short, it's a typical piece of Conservative rhetorical propaganda aimed at their core right-wing neocon constituency that really doesn't believe—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: This member is continually impugning motive. It's reckless, and I expect him to withdraw and apologize.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I'd ask the honourable member to just watch his language and continue the debate.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Let's hold this bill up to the light and see what a counterproductive, expensive and contradictory proposal it is. Those tiny bits of rhetorical merit, as we'll see, have already been done by Ontario, but the rest is just self-serving gruel to feed to the fervent ideological faithful.

This red-tape, spending and bloat bill, it has been estimated, would cost Ontario taxpayers \$50 million over three years to implement and about \$10 million each and every year to keep going. That includes the hiring of Ontario public service staff to just process paper, not to contribute to our province in any constructive way at all.

To contrast with the Nepean-Carleton PC red-tapebloat-and-spend bill, Ontario's most recent budget, read only six short weeks ago, will actually reduce the Ontario public service by 3,400 full-time employees over a threeyear period. Conservatives want to hire people to shuffle paper at public expense. Liberals have kept Ontario public service the leanest in Canada on a per capita basis.

The Tories would rather spend money on red tape, and our government is bringing down the recession deficit. The Conservatives will never balance the budget, and our government has shown that we can balance budgets and we also pay down Ontario's debt.

What people in the Conservative Party will find surprising is that the Nepean—Carleton PC red-tape-bloat-and-spend bill actually contradicts their own party policy. Let's look at it in light of the Conservative Party's already flawed, poorly researched and unworkable 10 for 2010.

They suggest capping spending, yet this bill would cost \$50 million to implement and \$10 million annually, including new staff. They suggest cutting regulations, but this bill would increase the rules, systems and require-

ments on OPS staff as well as the broader public sector and agencies, boards, and commissions. Their policy talks about cutting government, but on the other hand, this Conservative policy would expand the OPS and require significant resources to manage. So, very clearly, neither the member nor her party are actually serious about this measure, which does seem to be a reject from a low-level policy workshop.

The Conservative legacy while in government, and their policy while in opposition, has always been and continues to be half-baked, reactionary measures that bloat the bureaucracy.

Progress means going forward. This measure doesn't even try to back into the future; it runs full speed into the past. That's one good reason that this very flawed proposal doesn't deserve to be passed by this Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: How do you follow that drivel?

It's a pleasure to support my colleague from Nepean-Carleton and her Bill 39. This is about truth in government and accountability.

I heard the minister speak earlier, the minister responsible for accountability and integrity, and he talked about changes that this government has made. Granted, they have made some changes with respect to accountability and reporting, but it was in response to the fact that this government was rife with scandal, with no accountability and with taxpayers' money being parsed off to Liberal-friendly consultants for work that was really never done.

That's why the Premier was forced, last July, to come out with some new standards. Unfortunately, he brought in those standards and doesn't believe that he has to follow them himself. So our critic for accountability, Lisa MacLeod, has brought in measures that will make a difference.

In response to the member from Mississauga–Streets-ville: He's talking about added costs. This legislation will save far more than it will cost, because it will put pressure on people to be accountable. He talks about the red tape of reporting expenses. Well, interestingly enough, when someone has to report and tabulate expenses, and some-body on the other line has to pay those expenses, has to verify them, recheck the math and then write a cheque—all we're talking about is posting those expenses online. How much more would it cost to actually put those expenses online so the people can have a look at them?

Don't give me that—oh, I can't say it in here; I'll be shut down. Don't give me that line about how this is going to create all kinds of red tape. This is going to get to the bottom so that people who work in government are accountable. This is what it's all about: ensuring that when someone puts in a claim, it's legitimate. If the taxpayer of this province is paying for it, then the taxpayer of this province has a right to know what they're paying for.

It's not complicated, Minister. You had the opportunity to extend those rules to hospitals and all agencies, boards and commissions throughout this province. You chose not to because you don't want to get to the bottom of it; you don't want the facts. Dalton McGuinty wants to be able to purport to be concerned about accountability, but he really doesn't want to pay the price. The price is that there could be some other casualties.

We already had a casualty in the Ministry of Health over the eHealth scandal. The member for Don Valley East, who was the Minister of Health, is no longer in cabinet, even though most of the problems associated with eHealth and the scandal belong to the former minister, George Smitherman. But you can't fire somebody who has already quit. He flew the coop to be the mayor of Toronto because he saw the writing on the wall.

When the member for Nepean-Carleton brought in this bill, she considered all of the factors surrounding costs and benefits. There is no question whatsoever. The member for Mississauga-Streetsville talks about \$50 million or something. He says, "They say...." Who are "they"? That word gets used so often: "Well, they say," or, "We need." Who are "they" and who are "we"? He invents this kind of stuff. He sits over his computer late at night and dreams up these ridiculous, preposterous schemes, when in reality what he should be doing is serving his constituents and not taking his marching orders from the Premier's office all the time. He's hoping that someday he's going to move up a couple of rows, but they are running out of time over there, quite frankly.

Another thing that this is going to do is the reclassification. This is something that we've seen in the sunshine list, where sort of by stealth, people who were policy advisers in one of the ministries—and my friend from Nepean-Carleton will confirm this-all of a sudden become assistant deputy minister, at a much higher pay grade. It's not just a fact that they're getting promotions to keep them happy, but also, just as they are reaching that age when they might be getting ready to retire, this government is sliding them up to another classification so that when they calculate their pension credits, they are starting at a different level. And who's paying that? That's the taxpayer of the province of Ontario. So we want full, proactive disclosure of all reclassifications. What's wrong with that? Let's find out if people are earning new classifications based on merit or the fact that the Premier's office wants to make sure everybody in the senior bureaucracy is happy, because they need them when they are spreading their message prior to the next election.

That's a very important part of this legislation. You guys know it's true. You don't want to deal with it because, as I say, who could be against? There's nothing novel about the idea of wanting to have truth in government. I know that my friend from Trinity-Spadina, and correctly so, alludes to the fact that the public don't see those two words connected too much; they don't see the words "truth" and "government" connected. But this is an

opportunity for this government. Because it failed on its own, this would be an opportunity to stand and support a private member's bill that would do just that: make truth in government the law and restore the public's confidence in what we're doing here—not that window dressing, not that sham of a bill that you brought in, Minister, that really did nothing to restore the people's confidence. We're finding out even since then that untendered contracts are still the order of the day in McGuinty's Ontario. We'd put a stop to that. We would bring truth in government and confidence back to the people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Ms. MacLeod has up to two minutes for her reply.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker; I do appreciate it. I want to thank the member from Trinity-Spadina for offering the New Democrats' support, as well as my colleagues from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and Durham for speaking to this bill. I know that my colleague from Newmarket-Aurora would like to have spoken as well, but time did not permit.

Let me speak to the Liberals. I was aghast that the socalled integrity czar of this province, the Minister of Government Services, would speak to the bill the way he did. He knows full well that he was misleading this House when he suggested that he—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Order. I'd ask the honourable member to withdraw that remark.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'll withdraw. But he knows full well that he didn't tell the whole story, and that is a shame. This bill is not redundant; this bill would actually open up government to the people.

The member from Mississauga-Streetsville—I'm actually appalled at his behaviour—does not support political accountability, just like his federal cousins didn't, and he's apparently entitled to his own entitlements. I'd like to ask him how many schools, roads, hospitals and other public infrastructure we could have built under this bill had that \$1-billion eHealth boondoggle not occurred. This bill would have caught it.

I'm going to tell you something: You should be ashamed of yourselves for not supporting this. This bill is truth in government. They support lies in government. They support covering things up. They need to learn a lesson or two over there, because they continue to misspend money on the taxpayers' watch: \$3.6 billion that went to eHealth, OLG, WSIB, Cancer Care Ontario and the Windsor Energy Centre. They have no shame. I'm not sure how they look at themselves, with the waste, mismanagement and taxpayer abuses they have done to the people we represent in this chamber. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time provided for private members' public business has now expired.

GASOLINE TAX FAIRNESS FOR ALL ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR TOUS À L'ÉGARD DE LA TAXE SUR L'ESSENCE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will first deal with ballot item number 16, standing in the name of Mr. Yakabuski.

Mr. Yakabuski has moved second reading of Bill 40, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to matching rebates of gasoline tax that the Minister provides to municipalities.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?
All those in favour of the motion will please say
"ave."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will call in the members after the next two votes.

DEFIBRILLATOR ACCESS ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR L'ACCÈS AUX DÉFIBRILLATEURS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will now deal with ballot item number 17.

Mr. McMeekin has moved second reading of Bill 41, An Act to provide for defibrillators in premises accessed by members of the public.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I'd like to refer Bill 41 to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Shall the bill be referred to the standing committee? So referred.

Mr. Frank Klees: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Given the importance of this issue and the unanimous support of all members, notwithstanding the referral to committee, I would like to ask for unanimous consent that the bill be immediately referred for third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): At this time, if it's amenable, it could be ordered for third reading.

Mr. Klees has asked for unanimous consent that the bill be ordered for third reading. I heard a no.

TRUTH IN GOVERNMENT ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR LA VÉRITÉ AU SEIN DU GOUVERNEMENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with ballot item number 18.

Ms. MacLeod has moved second reading of Bill 39, An Act to provide for the disclosure of financial information in the public sector.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?
All those in favour of the motion will please say

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell. The division bells rang from 1640 to 1645.

GASOLINE TAX FAIRNESS FOR ALL ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR TOUS À L'ÉGARD DE LA TAXE SUR L'ESSENCE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Yakabuski has moved second reading of Bill 40.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

Ayes

Hardeman, Ernie Klees, Frank MacLeod, Lisa Marchese, Rosario O'Toole, John Sterling, Norman W. Yakabuski, John

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura Arthurs, Wayne Balkissoon, Bas Best, Margarett Brownell, Jim Colle, Mike Delaney, Bob Dhillon, Vic Dickson, Joe Flynn, Kevin Daniel Fonseca, Peter Jaczek, Helena Kular, Kuldip Mangat, Amrit McMeekin, Ted Moridi, Reza Pendergast, Leeanna Phillips, Gerry Qaadri, Shafiq Ramal, Khalii

Rinaldi, Lou Ruprecht, Tony Sandals, Liz Sergio, Mario Sousa, Charles Takhar, Harinder S. Wynne, Kathleen O. Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 7; the nays are 28.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll open the doors for 30 seconds.

TRUTH IN GOVERNMENT ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR LA VÉRITÉ AU SEIN DU GOUVERNEMENT

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would ask for the same vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Ms. MacLeod has moved second reading of Bill 39.

Same vote? Same vote.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 7; the nays are 28.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit, when the bill is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and

That, except in the case of a recorded division arising from morning orders of the day, pursuant to standing order 9(c), no deferral of the second reading vote shall be permitted; and

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Thursday, May 13, 2010, from 8 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. for the purpose of public hearings on the bill and during its regular afternoon meeting time on Thursday, May 13, 2010, for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 13, 2010. At 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 13, 2010, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, May 17, 2010. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, 60 minutes shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Phillips moves government notice of motion number 22. Minister?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I'll be relatively brief. The purpose of this motion is to allow us to move on with an important part of the budget, particularly to northern Ontario. I think that during the debate, most members appreciated that for the north, this is an important provision in our budget. They are anxious that we get moving on this, and, of course, the government therefore is as well. So I'm pleased to move this motion, to begin the debate on it, but I would just say to all of us that, from everything I have heard, particularly for our residents in northern Ontario, the northern Ontario energy credit portion of the budget bill is extremely important, and this will allow to us move forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: This is very unusual, because, really, what we're debating here is a time allocation motion. Time allocation is a very liberating sort of experience because you can basically talk about anything. You can go back to the truth-in-government bill. You can talk about a bill that Lisa Macleod, the member from Nepean-Carleton, talked about, or the unanimous consent motion today, Mr. McMeekin's bill, on the defibrillator, where Mr. Klees suggested that we have unanimous consent.

There has been a fair amount of harmony here this afternoon, and this time allocation motion is very strange for us, because on Bill 44 specifically, we fully understand the politics of the bill. Bill 44 basically should have been in Bill 16. The reason that the government, under Premier McGuinty, took it out-because he's sort trying to wedge, and I'm talking to the people of Ontario more than the people here that are reading. What it does is it sort of tries to divide. They're trying to say to us that we would not support a bill that tried to augment or supplement the cost of electricity in northern Ontario. Our argument, of course, is that we'd like to supplement this inordinately high cost of electricity for all Ontarians, and we've asked questions today and yesterday about people on medical devices that require electricity, whether it's people with COPD or people with MS. These are real situations where people of Ontario need to run these devices under medical orders during time of high prices of electricity, whether they live in Timiskaming or in Toronto.

I don't really understand why they're time-allocating it. The time allocation motion is forcing the end of debate—forcing it into committee, probably. It must be drafted incorrectly or something. Why would it go to committee? Because it's a pretty straightforward bill. In fact, it's actually in the budget.

If you look at the budget itself—I don't have that directly with me—oh, certainly I do; I always have that

stuff with me because I tend to read it. The whole part is in here. It's the undercut of the Open Ontario plan, which is the close Ontario plan, really. We call it the "oops" plan.

They have admitted, finally, that the energy policy strategy is so failed that George Smitherman left. It's so screwed up under Bill 150 that they've got the high energy crisis that has pretty well shut down northern Ontario. Mining: The member from Timmins-James Bay, Mr. Gilles Bisson, mentioned in his remarks the other day that about 40% of the cost of production in mining and forestry is energy. He had a private members' bill last Thursday dealing with processing of resources from Ontario in other provinces, where he wanted to protect that.

Because energy prices in Ontario are so uncompetitive with Quebec and Manitoba—they're actually in the budget here. They've got \$150 million in the industrial electricity program. That's to bring the price of electricity down in the Open Ontario plan. That's an admission by the Premier and his newly-minted Minister of Energy, who really is—they should have put Mr. Phillips back there, seriously. I mean this in terms of having good, sound policy and someone with experience at the helm of large corporations. This would be Mr. Phillips. Brad is a fairly decent hockey player; there's no question about that, but the only thing I see is that he's reading quite well and responding out of the briefing book from the Premier's office pretty thoroughly, but let's be clear: This is an admission of a failed policy.

If you look at the FIT program—feed-in tariff—for the people of Ontario, here's what's happening today in Toronto. I should look at all of my notes here and make sure I get this on the record. There was a good article in the Toronto Star that says that Toronto Hydro is going to increase the price of energy by 20%. Did everybody see that plan this morning? Here it is. It says, "Power Rates to Jump by 20%.

"Toronto Hydro Blames Decaying Infrastructure." It's written by Megan O'Toole. No relation, but that's who it's written by. Here's the deal: The price of energy for Ontario—guaranteed more than 20%. With their FIT program under Bill 150, "renewable energy" is code language for more expensive energy.

Here's the real story. Energy today is around five to six cents. The contracts they're signing with these new renewable companies, these private companies like Samsung from Korea, for solar energy is 80 cents a kilowatt hour. Wind is about 15 cents a kilowatt hour. Ask yourself at home—you're watching television, I hope, or through cable—it's not on cable anymore, actually.

Here's the issue: If you really look at it, how can they pay somebody who's generating electricity from solar panels 80 cents and charge you at home six cents? Let's just do a bit of math. It's eight times more expensive. They always use, "You're for coal." No, we're not for coal. In fact, we're the only ones who have ever closed a coal plant down in Ontario. Premier McGuinty promised

it in 2002. Has there ever been one closed? No. Actually, Elizabeth Witmer announced the closure of the Lakeview plant. I was there. Premier McGuinty has promised it twice: 2007, 2011 and now 2014. What did we say in 2002? In 2015. They cannot possibly deal—their plan so failed, it's absurd.

If you were to take the Nanticoke coal plant down, that's 5,000 megawatts. How would you possibly replace that if your economy, with the 600,000 jobs, actually did occur? It takes 10 years to build an energy plant of 5,000 megawatts. Figure out the math. It's another obfuscation or distortion of what they're doing. They say one thing and do another.

1700

When I go back to the FIT plan—Bill 150—energy is going up. Toronto Hydro is just the first to tell the truth. The NDP did a study: The minimum increase in energy alone, when the HST comes in, with the conservation tax and your smart meter, is \$350 or more for each home. It's more apt to be \$800. So if your bill today is \$2,000 per year for energy, it's probably going to be \$3,000.

These contracts they've signed are the big issue. Often, they quote on the energy file that countries like Sweden and Denmark—let's look at the facts. Denmark's average price of energy is 34 cents a kilowatt hour; ours is about six cents.

Your energy is an essential commodity. It's not discretionary consumption. Cable television is discretionary consumption. You can cancel the movie channel; electricity, you can't. In a home, you usually use, I would say, about 1,000 kilowatt hours a month, roughly. How much of that is discretionary? The experts say that discretionary consumption in energy is about 5% in a home.

They say to you that the smart meter will allow you to save. No, no, no; that is absolutely false. A smart meter allows you to shift energy. It doesn't help you to stop drying your clothes. It tells you to dry them at 3 in the morning instead of 3 in the afternoon. All it does is shift the load. It doesn't conserve one kilowatt. They're getting away scot-free with this sort of misinformation campaign.

Conservation would be allowing people to have a clothesline so they don't use energy; they use the natural resources of the environment. Conservation would be encouraging people not to heat their homes, or to turn the thermostat down, or providing options for consumers.

They've cancelled the energy credit for buying EnerStar products: dryers, stoves, fridges. They've cancelled that credit. You know why? Because it's a cost. What they are doing is taxing every single consumption the average family makes.

The families in Hamilton or Durham that may be laid off from the steel industry, or from industry generally, are going to—on July 1, every single thing they buy—some of which is taxed today—all of them, with the exception of food, basically—baby food and hygiene products and the odd book—for everything else, you're going to pay tax.

Imagine, on Canada Day, taking the children to Canada's Wonderland. You'll be paying more at Canada's Wonderland. There's a destination tax for tourism. Tourism is going up. You'll be paying more for the gas: 8 cents more a litre. Can you imagine an 8-cent-a-litre jump on 30 or 40 litres? Eight cents, to me—that one tax on gas, I've sort of thought about it. I've talked to some of my constituents, to try to help them. Mr. Wilkinson does a great job of explaining it, but most of it is on the side of business.

If you spend—let's just keep it simple—\$100 a week on gas; you might spend more or less than that—transit, whatever—\$100 a week. Now it's \$108 a week. That's \$400 a year, just that one commodity. It's \$400 more per year for gas. That's not cable television. That's not your electricity. That's not your other consumables—going to the movies; kids' registration for hockey, rugby, soccer or whatever it is. The NDP, to their credit, and respectfully, I think have it right. It's probably about \$1,200 more per family.

People say to me, "Well, what's the advantage?" The advantage is for business, and it is. The chamber of commerce, Len Crispino and those—long-time Liberals, by the way—were right out in front of this. It's a bigtime—that's great. It is good. It's a poison pill on the other side. The consumer is going to pay. All of the tax that business spends on input will be called an input tax credit, so they'll be able to reduce their profit from sales or business by the tax that they pay. That's a good thing, because if you're selling cars, for instance, and you have to buy solder and glue and paint and all that stuff in Ontario that you pay tax on, you'll be able to reduce that tax. Today you can reduce the federal tax, the GST portion. As of July 1 you'll be able to reduce the PST, the provincial portion—they call it an input tax credit—and get it fully back. Your product would be cheaper in the United States by 8%, so that's a good thing. Here's the deal, though: If you look at the fine print, corporations with income over \$10 million won't qualify. GE, General Electric, all those companies won't get it until 2018. They won't qualify for the input tax credit.

But why is the government doing this profound change? They have a deficit of almost \$22 billion and they need to increase revenue. Employment is falling, so income tax revenue is down. The economy is down, so corporate profit is down. Last year they lost—Mr. Phillips would know this—\$5 billion in revenue from corporate tax. That happened to Bob Rae too. I remember that I was chair of the budget municipally at that time of Bob Rae, Floyd Laughren and Ed Philip, the minister. Businesses were all laying people off, and income tax was down; the corporate profit was down. The same thing is happening to Mr. McGuinty.

Consumption: Every single thing you buy—car, house, funeral, flowers; you name it—will be taxed. You are going to pay more for everything. Some of it, today you are paying.

I always recall, though—memories are a good thing to have in this business. When Brian Mulroney introduced

this GST years ago—you'd recall this, because you were, I think, warden of the county at that time—I think they had the largest majority in federal government. After the election, there were two people left in the Mulroney government. Kim Campbell became the interim leader, and there were two people left. Even the leader got defeated. I hope that Premier McGuinty—he might resign anyway. I think Kathleen Wynne would be a good leader. The point is, though, that I think there were two left. There was Jean Charest and Elsie Wayne. They were the two people left. You'd recall this. John Charest, who is now the Liberal Premier of Quebec, and Elsie Wayne, a long-time respected person from Nova Scotia—I think mayor of Halifax at one time—were the only two left at that time.

So there is a price to be paid for these significant tax changes. The irony, if you look at that—this question will come up probably during the election. Here's the real issue: During the election, Jean Chrétien, the leader of the Liberals, and Sheila Copps were asked, and they campaigned on promising-Mr. Phillips would remember this—to cancel the GST. Do you recall that? Of course you would. He's shaking his head. That's very good. The fact is that Sheila Copps actually ended up resigning and running in a by-election. She won again—a very astute political person—but she ran again because she admitted she had sort of misled the people or whatever during the election. They never cancelled it. In fact, when they got their hands on the books, they realized how much revenue was coming in from the GST: \$27 billion a year from the GST alone.

The interesting thing is, in this one here, the numbers are starting to come out. The increase in revenue on the HST, the harmonized tax, and the efficiencies, which there are, although they've just switched the cost to the federal government—the federal government is looking at the efficiency of harmonization across Canada. I'll get to that part too. There will be a lack of expenditure, so they're going to save the 1,200 people who got transferred with the severance pay—\$25 million in severance, unnecessarily, just for going to work for the federal government in the same office, doing the same job. And the increase in revenue I would put—well, the transition funding from the federal government was \$4.3 billion. Now, if we change the rules, they would have to pay back the contract that Premier McGuinty and Dwight Duncan signed.

1710

So it will come up during the election, but the people should understand that it cannot be cancelled because of the poison pill that Premier McGuinty wilfully signed.

He did not have to do some of the things. He didn't have to harmonize to the current 8%. Like Gordon Campbell, the Premier of BC, he could have said, "No, we're not going to tax gas." BC actually looked after the people of British Columbia. Premier McGuinty is taking the full amount of money he can get on this new tax. Why? Because he has a deficit of \$22 billion. It's almost staggering debt.

What's debt? It's future taxes for you. That's what it is. Do you know how much interest we pay on our mortgage in Ontario?—I'm talking to the pages here. Ten billion dollars a year. If the interest rate goes up, I predict it will be \$14 billion in interest alone annually to pay for our mortgage.

But getting back to point, I think they are going to get about \$8 billion more in revenue. That's revenue less expense savings, so \$7 billion and \$1 billion in the

savings part.

When I get to this northern Ontario tax thing, it's fairness for Ontarians, and the general theme of this is trying to augment support in the north, because the NDP have a couple of very important seats, so they're catering to the northern vote here. But I think they should be catering to all Ontarians.

I have a constituent who finds the smart meter, where you have the high rate of 9.9 cents a kilowatt hour at noon or during the day, and at 3 in the morning that's going to be probably 3 cents a kilowatt hour—off-peak electricity is going to be quite reasonably priced. This person has MS. They need climate control 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so their electricity bill will probably double. If it's \$400, it's going to be \$800. This would apply to anybody with COPD or any prescribed health care technical solution. It could be breathing; it could be oxygen; there are doctors here who could probably fill in the blanks on this.

So, if you're going to do it for northern Ontario, which I can't not support, because it's an admission of a failed policy—they've said Toronto Hydro, and everybody knows even in the budget, that it's going to cost more for electricity big time, and the HST is another whole

different other big time out of your pocket.

They're saying to northern Ontario-because the economy is right on its tail in pulp and paper, mining, forestry and the rest of it—that they're going to reduce both the industrial part, which I think is about a \$150million program called industrial electrification program averaging. On the residential side—this is almost shameful. It's almost shameful. When you look at the bill—I have the bill here. I looked at the bill in some detail, and it's pathetic. It's a hundred and some dollars for a person with an income under \$45,000, and it's actually \$200 for a family, but it's going to be disbursed in quarterly payments. Can you imagine how much it will cost to issue four \$25 cheques, one in each quarter? I can't believe it. It's just absolutely-having that cheque coming in, the people of Ontario cannot be fooled. They can't be bought with their own money.

It says the cheques will be paid quarterly, and the formula is on page 5, if anybody wants to read it—probably nobody has. The formula is 130 minus an average divided by four—four cheques. But to issue a cheque for \$25 in the province of Ontario probably costs \$25. You have to program the system. You've got the paper, the documents, the printers, the stamps and all the rest of that kind of stuff, and some clerical person and some mail person. It's going to cost more to process it

and deliver it. I can't imagine—\$125. It's absolutely—how can people be so easily fooled by this? Imagine. This is going to help you pay for an electricity bill that's going to double, and the most hideous thing of all this is that in the north, a lot of the power, the dams, the waterfalls, the natural environment and that which could be saved—there are electrons going right by houses that cost four cents to produce. They're going to send it back to you and charge you 12 cents. It's absolutely unbelievable; I can't believe it.

Now, the bill itself, the sentiment of it—first of all, I've made this clear: It should have been in Bill 16. Why they took it out is all politics, so we would be tending to vote against a government bill that treats one part of Ontario differently than another. The city of Kawartha Lakes and that community, as the member from that area should know, is the lowest-income in the province of Ontario. It's lower than northern Ontario communities. Why aren't they getting the break? Why don't they give a break to people based on income? People who are poor or have a shelter problem or a diet problem—why don't they do the fair thing? This isn't about fairness. No, no, this is wedge politics, courtesy of Premier McGuinty.

We agree that the price of electricity is too high. But what they are doing is they're going to give a break to only some of the people. What about my constituents who have chronic disease, where they need to use electricity that's going to be more expensive by a poorly designed and implemented policy? I can't believe it.

I look at the broader issue here. Jan Carr. a Ph.D. person, was the head of the Ontario Power Authority: fantastic, capable, intelligent. I read the supply-mix report for the new design of energy. You would know him as well, Mr. Speaker: ethical, principled, intelligent. Even he was in the paper questioning this new strategy under Bill 150 on the feed-in tariff—and other professors. Last week, we had the wind energy people out here from all over parts of Ontario, absolutely frustrated about how the government has single-handedly overridden municipal planning, overridden health care, overridden health experts. Dr. McMurtry was there and spoke to the group. All have said that this should be slowed down and addressed. Let's get it right. Other countries are now seeing the problem, the legacy issues with wind and some of these hastily implemented plans. What is Premier McGuinty doing? They're going to shove it down your throat. You're going to pay more for something that you don't want because it sounds green and it sounds good.

Even on this late Thursday afternoon, when most people want to be home, they've time-allocated a bill. That's a wedge. We support it. There's a requirement of a certain amount of time. We think it's unfair and unreasonable, but at least it's an admission of a failed policy in energy pricing and energy generally. The smart meters are a frigging disguise. It's nothing more than shifting load. Let's be honest with people. A smart meter is this—

Mr. Peter Kormos: Excuse me. What did you say?

Mr. John O'Toole: It's not a smart meter.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Before that.

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a disguise. It's an unintelligible meter.

But anyway, my point is this: A real smart meter—and I know of people who have them. The smart meter would be that you could actually phone—let's say you had a smart meter, a genuinely smart meter, in your home, or it could be at your cottage. You could be driving home to your condo in North York, phone a number and turn on your microwave oven. That technology exists today. You could actually, on the weekend, phone and turn your hot water heater off at your cottage or at your home, or check up on something. That's a smart meter. It's an accessible panel. Those exist today; I'm not making this up.

When I look at this whole thing, it's about a simple part of giving a couple of credits. There are income credits or tax credits for people of modest means under Bill 44. Here it is: \$130 for an individual and \$200 for a family per year, paid out in quarterly instalments with a government of Ontario cheque, with Premier McGuinty's picture on the cheque, probably. I think it's absolutely shameful.

As I said, our leader, Tim Hudak, our critic, John Yakabuski, and the finance critic, Norm Miller, have basically said to us that we agree, that it's an admission of a failed energy policy and we would like to support it. It may be that by co-operatively working with the Premier, he'll admit and find other solutions to deal with this nondiscretionary consumption product. Energy is nondiscretionary. You need it. You have to consume it. I think it's quite interesting. The whole energy file is in complete and utter disarray.

I'm looking at Ms. Best, the Minister of Health Promotion. In your riding, it's a huge issue. These people don't want these big turbines flashing in their view of Lake Ontario. I'm sorry; they don't. They don't, really. It's not going to add anything anyway, because here is the issue with wind: In high pressure, there is very little wind. It's sort of stagnant wind conditions. High pressure is when you need energy. When it's really hot, that's high pressure. There's no wind. It's quite stagnant; still days, no wind. They won't be turning. They'll be sitting there taking up space. And here's the other part: When it's really cold—

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: You'll respond to this, I'm sure.

In the winter, when it's high pressure, it's really cold, and when it's really cold, there is no wind. That's when you need the heat. When it's really hot, when you need the energy—this would never replace dispatchable load. That is energy that you can dispatch on demand, like natural gas or some other peaking kind of performance. Nuclear plants, the way the system is designed, are for baseload. They're on all the time or they're off, period. You need a dispatchable load that you can turn on when it's high pressure and turn off when it's normal, or turn on in winter or summer, to create all that extra demand with air conditioning etc.

I can't believe how badly they've screwed this file up. It's no wonder George Smitherman left. I can tell you now, as mayor of Toronto, if he gets away with what he got away with here, people will be quite disappointed, I think.

I honestly think that the Open Ontario plan and some of the things they've done—driving down deeper into Bill 44 is this: Under Bill 44—I'm going to leave the driving down part to my counterparts who may wish to speak on this bill.

With that, I'm leaving a reasonable amount of time for others who may want to contribute. I know that this is a bill that—it's really time allocation; I understand that. Our member from Nepean—Carleton is an expert in that area. I would say that the member from Oxford is too, but he may prefer to be silent on the issue.

I'm going to relinquish the rest of my time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further

Mr. Peter Kormos: Yet another time allocation motion. The lengths to which this government—the Liberal government, the McGuinty government, the government of openness, Kormos says sarcastically, and transparency, I say once again sarcastically, has taken the time allocation motion, the guillotine motion, and made it the norm. They're trivial. They happen so regularly.

People say, "Why is one concerned?" Because look at what this time allocation motion does: It restricts public access to the committee considering this bill to but two hours and 15 minutes, beginning at 8 a.m. It's not about the rights of members; it's about the rights of the public, the rights of people out there, the taxpayers, amongst them, northerners, who at the end of the day will not be impacted by this bill as much as the government would want them to believe. Their maximum \$200 credit for a family doesn't even begin to address the \$800-a-year new cost that this government is imposing upon families as a result of its HST, does it?

I find it extremely sad that this government would slam the door on the people of this province, people who have every good reason to want to make comment on this bill. It's not about the MPPs; it's about the people of Ontario. Because you see, that committee process is the one opportunity that folks, just plain folks-whether they're rich or poor; whether they're university-educated; whether they got themselves a high school or a grade 10 junior matriculation before they had to go out and work in the factory or in the mine; whether they're urban or rural; whether they're northern or southern-don't have to sit the way they sit up there in the visitors' gallery, silent and with their hands clasped. They daren't even applaud, because of course the rules don't permit it. The Parliament is just for parliamentarians, but the committee is for the public.

This time allocation—look, if the government and Mr. McGuinty want to beat up on opposition members, go ahead. Most of us are reasonably seasoned. We've got thick skins, and if we don't have thick skins, we've got enough scar tissue. We can withstand the occasional beating. But don't beat up on the public.

For the life of me, I don't understand why Mr. McGuinty and his Liberal caucus would want to thumb their noses and show such disdain, such disregard, for the people of this province, people who have already taken a beating of their own—250,000, 275,000, maybe 300,000 jobs lost in the last four, four and a half, maybe five years, jobs that aren't coming back.

Down where I come from, you drive down the canal there towards Dain City, and John Deere had been there 100 years. John Deere: the famous green-and-yellow John Deere. The railway line there used to ship their product out. The last thing they were making, and they were busy making it—good tradespeople, qualified tradespeople, a whole lot of welders, amongst others—they were putting together those four-wheel-drive vehicles that hunters and bush workers use. They're also used as recreational vehicles. They're owned and operated by city parks and by people who work in places like provincial parks, like Algonquin and so on. Eight hundred workers—this was skilled labour, a whole lot of tradespeople. A hundred years, gone in a mere snap of a finger.

The government says, "What could we have done?" Mr. Marchese, the government says, "Oh, it was a recession; it was worldwide. What could we have done?" John Deere abandoned Welland and took those—it's not that they stopped producing little four-wheel-drive vehicles. Darn right they didn't stop producing them. They're making them down in Mexico now. Mr. McGuinty said, "Well, what could we do?"

Mr. Marchese's going to speak to this time allocation motion at some point, and he would be the first to say to Mr. McGuinty, "Well, what could we do?"

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Something like that, but not entirely like that.

Mr. Peter Kormos: He says.

Do you know what you could have done? You could have had a buy-Ontario policy, and then John Deere would have had a reason to keep its plant in Welland here in the province of Ontario, knowing full well that every vehicle purchased by the province of Ontario for use by provincial parks workers, by conservation officers, by MNR officers was going to be an Ontario-made vehicle, and that—hmm, interesting—at the end of the day would have meant it would be a John Deere, because I don't know of any other manufacturer that was making those four-wheel-drive bush vehicles, utility vehicles, here in the province of Ontario, or for that matter in most places in Canada. Maybe Bombardier, the Ski-Doo manufacturer, makes them in Quebec; I'm not sure.

It's just sad, shameful, disgraceful; a denial of the public right, the long-time public access to the parliamentary process by way of committee. Oh, 8 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. for public comment.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I can't believe it. They're coming from the north.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Mr. Marchese points out.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They're coming from the north.

Mr. Peter Kormos: He says.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: When are they going to get here? The day before?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Mr. Marchese notes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You understand? Nobody's going to come.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I hear Mr. Marchese when he says that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Can you refer to him by his riding name?

Mr. Peter Kormos: When he's in his seat, I will. As it is, he's just another person wandering the passageway between the two sides of the Parliament. When he's in his seat, he's the member for Trinity-Spadina. Right now he's Mr. Marchese. His wife calls him Rosario.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Rosario.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Rosario—of course she does. And I know his wife well enough that she calls him other things as well.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: "Bello."

Mr. Peter Kormos: He points out.

So here we are: 8 a.m. to 10:15. Perhaps the prospect of amendments—maybe, just maybe a member of that committee might listen, instead of playing with their BlackBerry, to a person making a submission and say, "The light just turned on. What that particular member of the Ontario public said was a remarkable contribution to the process and warrants an amendment to the bill." What did the government do? The government said that you've got to have an amendment in by 12:30 the same day.

Come on! What that's saying is, "To heck with you and your amendments. Forget about it. Don't even bother. Don't even think about it. Amendments? Not in your wildest dreams—never, ever, ever amendments." That's what the government is saying when it says you've got committee hearings from 8 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Who's going to come?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Mr. Marchese knows—8 a.m. to 10:15, and then have the amendments filed with the clerk of that committee by 12:15. Oh, but the real kicker, the real kick in the head—what was that song, Ain't That a Kick in the Head?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yes, I think so.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The real kick in the head is that you've got clause-by-clause on the same day—yes, I've got that right; it's May 13—and on the same day during its regular afternoon meeting time, which means that you can't meet during routine proceedings, so you have to wait until orders of the day—somebody help me: What day of the week is that?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Thursday.

Mr. Peter Kormos: It would be a Thursday. So, around 2 o'clock that afternoon, Mr. Marchese notes—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Everybody skedaddles out of here.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Except Mr. Marchese is here on a Thursday afternoon at 5:32 p.m. The committee meets in

the afternoon around 2, once orders of the day come—that's what time they come on a Thursday—and then considers the amendments at the same time as they're going through the bill clause-by-clause.

Let's understand something that's very important: When a bill is debated in second reading, the debate is in principle only. No one expects the debate to be a debate on the minutia of the legislation. Do you understand what I'm saying? Because, in fact, the bill isn't finished yet. The bill is debated in principle on second reading. It's in the committee where the observations, where the scrutiny, where the analysis of the clause-by-clause occurs. That's where it's supposed to occur; it's where it has to occur. It's in the committee where a member of opposition or a member of the government, should they have the wherewithal to do it, can ask the parliamentary assistant, "What does this section mean? What impact does it have on resident A, resident B or resident C?" It's in committee that a member of the committee, whether they be government or opposition, can say, "Hmm, North Bay, Sudbury, but if you live a kilometre south of that boundary"-

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Too bad, so sad.

Mr. Peter Kormos: "It's too bad, so sad, I'm glad, but you're stiffed; you're out of luck." You're, as Mr. O'Toole—if he were speaking to this—would probably say, SOL. Don't even think about it.

So you see, perhaps it would be a valid question to ask the parliamentary assistant: "How did you arrive at this particular determination? How can you be so arbitrary?" Then you can expect a response from the parliamentary assistant. Now, you may not get one, but I've found that most parliamentary assistants want to appear to be reasonable and knowledgeable about the legislation. You may just get some idea, and not just getting an idea for oneself but putting on record some idea, so that the public has a reference point and so that the government doesn't keep moving the goal posts.

I know you can't do that here in the Legislative Assembly, in the chamber, not during second reading debate. You can't do it in third reading debate. There was a time that the government—and I've actually heard government members say, "What do you need third reading for? What's your problem?" You might be interested in knowing that at one time Parliaments had four, five and six readings of a bill. Of course, when one refers to reading a bill, it's about the fact that in early Parliaments, they didn't publish printed bills. They didn't have offset presses; Gutenberg hadn't performed his magic yet. So the reading of a bill meant that the Clerk literally read the only copy of the bill that existed. She or he literally read the bill, and that's how parliamentarians knew what the bill consisted of. It would be very expensive for them to hire a transcriber, if they were available, to sit down and copy out that bill, so the bill was read in its entirety. Parliamentarians listened carefully, and, indeed, there was debate on first reading of a bill. As I say, there were four, five and six readings of bills. In other words, the bill was read.

Committee existed at that very early point in our parliamentary history as well. Committee didn't have the same sort of public access to it. Thank goodness it does now. In our adoption of democratic ideals in a representative democracy, we've also incorporated some level of participatory democracy in that citizens come here and speak to legislation, as they should, and as I encourage them to.

I've got to tell you, Speaker, there's nothing more discouraging than being in a committee and having folks sitting there watching the committee process and folks lined up anxiously waiting-some are a little damp on the forehead because they're nervous and their palms are a little sweaty because they've never done it before, and they think, "Oh, my goodness, here I am in the provincial Legislature." We've got all these parliamentarians sitting there and they've got the clerk and the Chair and they've worked really hard on a submission. Well, they have. They've been thoughtful. They've sweated over a submission. They've written it, and they've edited it and edited it again, and they've edited it so they can time it and don't go over time, because of the clerk when they called to make their appointment to appear in front of the committee. And then they drive here from Lord knows where. They drive here from Smiths Falls or Timiskaming, and they leave early in the morning because they don't want to be late, so they leave home at 3:30 or 4 in the morning. They're in Toronto—and some folks have been to Toronto a lot; other folks don't go to Toronto as often as some people do. They have no reason to. Toronto isn't the end of the world, and it's not the beginning either. There's a whole lot to Ontario besides the intersection of Yonge and Bloor, let me tell you.

So they come to the committee. They're apprehensive and they're nervous, but they have worked hard; they've worked incredibly hard. I sit there and I watch them and I listen to them, and I'm so proud of them. I'm not talking about the lobbyists who come time after time after time. I'm talking about the plain folks—so proud of them. They come and they sit themselves down, and the Chair inevitably says, "Please identify yourself for the record," and that starts to sound oh, so Law and Order-ish, like television, like it's pretty important stuff. I don't know why Chairs simply can't say, "Would you please tell us your name." This "for the record"—it's Chair-itis, I suppose, that little bit of pomposity that comes with it.

But they begin their submissions. Oftentimes, they are written, and they've prepared them, and I read along, as some others do. Then I look up and I see a government member, head bowed, eyes glazed, as their fingers are thumping away at a BlackBerry buried deep in their lap. And I think, "How rude. How insulting." What an arrogant piece of work that is when a well-meaning resident of this province comes forward and works so hard, and MPPs, who almost inevitably make more money than they do, are sitting there playing with their godawful BlackBerrys instead of listening to them. Or they're whispering in each other's ears, and you can't hear

exactly what they're saying, but sure as God made little apples, you know they ain't talking about the presenter and his or her submissions or about the bill. Or they're just sitting there with that stuporific drool, the spittle look, the glazed-eyed spittle look, because they're bored and disinterested, and they aren't afraid to let anybody know it.

Those are affronts to democracy, aren't they? It's as much an affront as to simply tell people, "Don't even bother coming," because if you do manage to get here by 8, and if you do manage to fit into that very narrow time slot of two hours and 15 minutes—correct me if I'm wrong, but 8 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. is two hours and 15 minutes—you're probably not going to be heard or listened to anyways because you're going to have government members wiping the sleep out of their eyes and scratching parts of their body that they had missed earlier that morning.

The proof is in the pudding, because if the government was really interested in hearing what folks had to say, surely they would have provided more time than the 12:30 deadline for filing amendments, wouldn't they have? If people were going to be listened to, and if a government member or an opposition member of that committee were going to say, "Hey, that's a good idea. Let's interpret, let's translate that idea into an amendment. Let's put it into legalese so that maybe the committee can consider that"—well, the government clearly isn't interested in that happening, is it? Because when you've got a 12:30 deadline, and then you've got the committee starting up again at 2—ah, but catch this: This will rot your socks. This will knock you flat on your behind. You've got a committee that at 5 o'clock, after about three hours maximum, regardless of what stage in the bill you're at on clause-by-clause and regardless of how many amendments remain to be moved and discussed, the guillotine drops again. There's another decapitation.

Mr. David Zimmer: That's the whole idea.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Mr. Zimmer says. And I don't know. Mr. Zimmer's here; he's sitting in the Premier's seat. Perhaps revenge is best served cold. I don't know what he's serving, but if it's revenge, I'm suspecting it is cold.

Then, at 5 o'clock, every amendment is deemed to have been moved—deemed; that means it's made without being made.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Time to skedaddle.

Mr. Peter Kormos: They're out of there. They're gone. As Mr. Marchese says, skedaddle. As Mr. O'Toole might say, gone in a friggin' New York minute. I do believe that Mr. O'Toole—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I would respectfully ask the honourable member to respect a couple of rules. One is to refer to honourable members here in the chamber by their riding name. I'll just leave it at that.

The member has the floor.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Mr. Zimmer wasn't here earlier. The member for Durham, I believe for the first time in

the history of this Legislature, used the word "frigging" and put it on the record.

Now, as I recall it—and I'm not sure; I think it was James Michener, the novelist—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: No, hold it. I'm going to get to that. Don't get impatient. I believe it was James Michener who first utilized it; this was back in 1950s. He was writing novels—South Pacific. He wrote a series of novels and, as a kid, this was easy history, right? If it wasn't him, it was Norman Mailer. It was either Norman Mailer or Michener, but it might well have been Mailer—Mailer would be more likely—who was skirting the obviously strong censorship in the 1950s. There's only a few of us who remember it. Zimmer remembers it. I do. He was an adult at the time. I was a child, but I was relatively precocious. I was reading stuff. But I remember reading that as a kid and I thought, "Hm? Frigging?" Is it Michener?

Hon. Margarett R. Best: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The member from Welland is using words that he shouldn't be using in front of these young people in the Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. I'm not going to rule that the word is unparliamentary because I've heard it in here before at least under three different speakers and have used it myself. But I would ask the member—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Order. I would say to the member for Welland, he is causing some offence in the House, so I'd ask him to moderate his language, if he would, please.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The Minister of Health Promotion finds that offensive. Her sex ed agenda would have curled my grandmother's hair.

Interiections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Honourable member, you have to be in your seat to make a point of order. The member for Welland has the floor.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The Minister of Health Promotion—

Mr. David Zimmer: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I respect and understand your ruling on the use of the word that my friend opposite from Welland is using, but perhaps it would be appropriate, if he wants to continue using that nomenclature and so on, that we adjourn for a night sitting.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Unanimous consent, Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for Welland has the floor.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The member for Willowdale had friends in caucus. He's down a few now.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, no, no. Get back to the sex education.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I don't know. At the end of the day, the sex education agenda really didn't get me going.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That was a tough one.

Mr. Peter Kormos: As I say, my grandmother—it would have curled her hair. She's dead now, God bless her. But there were concepts in that, even at the advanced levels, that she just never imagined—right?—that she just never thought of. So here, you find "frigging" offensive? Please.

The member for Durham is a member of—here we go to where Dr. Qaadri was motioning because Dr. Qaadri knows all about these sorts of things.

So, not only do we have the member for Durham vanguarding the use of new language; he, as you'll recall, was at the vanguard, at the forefront, of the movement of using politically active hand gestures.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: He's joined the digital age.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Qaadri has made his first really effective, really funny witticism. He's on Hansard now, I trust, is he? You've got to, because I responded to him.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Okay. Good. So, for those of you reading Hansard, Qaadri reminds us that O'Toole has joined the digital age.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All right. Let's try this again. At least refer to members by their riding names. Try not to offend anyone, because we have about 13 minutes left. While we're enjoying your debate, there are a few rules that we need to respect. Thank you.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Which rule is he breaking?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Marchese asks.

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I've just been so distracted lately. I'm talking about the last 27 minutes. I've been so distracted by the interjections that I've been subjected to, the heckling, the embarrassing attacks on me by other members of the Legislature. I'm trying to take it in my stride.

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We're talking about a time allocation motion, which is embarrassing. Once again, I say to the Minister for Health Promotion, if you want to be embarrassed about something, don't be embarrassed about the member for Durham or me using the word "frigging"; be embarrassed that your government has imposed another time allocation motion, not just on the people of this Legislature but on the people of Ontario. That should embarrass you, not the utilization of some sanitization of a classic Anglo-Saxonism without which the English language would be far poorer. Ask Nancy Ruth.

Applause.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Zimmer applauds.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The member for Willowdale.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Zimmer is the member from Willowdale. I knew that, Speaker; I trust everybody else did, too.

I'm not going to be supporting the time allocation motion. New Democrats won't be supporting the time allocation motion. Let me take you to the final offence here, that is, the third reading or, rather, lack of it. Again—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What about that intervention?

Mr. Peter Kormos: What can I say, Mr. Marchese?

It's the third reading or rather lack of it: 60 minutes divided equally, 20 minutes per caucus. The opposition made it clear that they didn't oppose this bill, in principle. The opposition made it equally clear that they had some strong concerns about the bill and whether it did what it purported to do, or at least what the Premier or his minister would claim that it did.

I suppose when one analyzes what this bill really does, the word "frigging" and the finger are entirely appropriate because the bill, at the end of the day, does so little for the folks who need assistance so badly.

One of the concerns that we had was the one-kilometre phenomenon, those folks who just happen to live one kilometre south of the arbitrary boundary, who are going to say, "Hey, the temperature didn't increase by 10 degrees this past winter because I live one kilometre south of the artificial boundary of North Bay or Sudbury." I can't imagine what those folks are going to say.

I can't imagine—well, I do know what my folks are going say down in Welland, a whole lot of senior citizens, a whole lot of elderly people struggling to keep their homes; putting off roofing jobs; hoping that the shingles will last one more year; fearful of having the gas guy come in at the beginning of heating season for fear that finally the red tag may be applied to the furnace—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They're going to get whacked; no credit for them.

Mr. Peter Kormos: —which means that it's shut down and they have to finally replace it; hoping and praying that the water tank will last for one more year because the prospect of paying—what?—\$1,000 for a water tank is not so cheap. You don't get water tanks for \$1,000 anymore. It's just not part of their budget.

Then they're hammered, whacked, as the Marcheseism would have it, by ever-increasing fuel costs, heating costs and property taxes, and ever-declining pensions or pensions that simply collapse. You have people who are going to be hammered yet again. I remember Judge Marc Girard, a provincial judge, a dear friend, a beautiful man whom I love dearly, who is down in Welland. He always took great offence when he was judging an assault charge or basically a barroom-style fight. At the end of the day, he didn't mind fisticuffs, but he really made it clear in terms of sentencing as well that you don't put the boots to somebody when they're down; that was the act of a coward. You had already won the fight. There was no reason at that point to kick somebody in the head or in the kidney or in the belly. Yet, people in this province, hard hit-250,000, 275,000, maybe 300,000 good jobs lost, not replaced, not restored, and an economic recovery that is very much a Bay Street recovery but not a Main Street recovery. That's the reality of it. The papers tell us that. Folks are down; they've already been knocked down and they are struggling to get back on their feet. They're literally struggling. As a matter of fact, it's like a scene from that Paul Newman movie, Cool Hand Luke. Remember that scene? If not, it was Straw Dogs, with Dustin Hoffman. I remember the scene: him struggling after getting a beating, struggling to get up, blood dripping, his strength sapped, struggling to get up. People in Ontario, working families and their retired parents, are struggling to get back on their feet. Then, July 1, they get hammered again, they get booted while they're down, with the HST. Stats Canada tells us that is going to cost the average family \$800 a year in new taxes.

It's not fair. People have already cut to the bone. They've already trimmed the fat. They've already used up modest savings. They've already cut back as far as anybody can cut back. Go ask any retailer. Today I had to go to the bank and give them some money before the sheriff came knocking on my door. When I was at the bank, I ran into one of the owners of This Ain't the Rosedale Library, the bookstore that used to be over on Church Street; they're over in Kensington Market now. I've known that store for years, a great store, one of the last, along with The Cookbook Store, my dear friends at The Cookbook Store at Yonge and Yorkville, wonderful women who run a great store. People should drop into The Cookbook Store. All they sell is cookbooks and books about food.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Hence the name.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Yes, hence the name, The Cookbook Store. It's a great store. They're great folks. They have international books. They read book reviews from all over the world; they bring in books—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Where is this?

Mr. Peter Kormos: On the corner of Yorkville and Yonge, the southwest corner.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Right across from the library.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Right across from the Toronto Reference Library. They're wonderful people, delightful people, very knowledgeable, and they know everybody. They know James Chatto and they know—they won't name-drop unless you ask them to, but they know all these people. They know all the cooks and the writers of these books and the heirs to the Julia Child throne. But that's an independent bookstore. I love that bookstore. People should go there and buy their books, The Cookbook Store, corner of Yorkville and Yonge, across from the Metro Reference Library. They're open seven days a week.

As a matter of fact, when I was laid up really bad, before I had the surgery over Christmastime, I was immobile. I literally wasn't eating, because I just couldn't. I was that sick that I wasn't eating at the time. So I'd phone them up and say, "Purolate half a dozen titles to me, because if I can't eat, at least I can read about it." I did. They were—

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Trust me, I didn't want to eat. I didn't feel like eating, but I missed the taste. So the ladies at The Cookbook Store at Yorkville and Yonge—it faces Yonge Street, the southwest corner.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: No, there is no parking anymore because there is development now.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You can take the subway. Mr. Peter Kormos: Take the subway, of course, or bicycle there. But go to The Cookbook Store, corner of Yorkville and Yonge.

But I was talking to one of the owners of This Ain't the Rosedale Library. I was in the bank giving the bank money, as I say, before the sheriff came knocking.

I was embarrassed, because I hadn't been in their store over in Kensington Market; it's been there a couple of years now. This Ain't the Rosedale Library, again, is one of the last of its kind. They carry an eclectic collection and some very small publishing companies, some very limited-run and some leading-edge, very edgy kind of stuff. But they also know their books. Just like the ladies at The Cookbook Store, they read their books. They know, because they read them all. The folks at This Ain't the Rosedale Library read their books. If they know you as a customer, they know you'll like this one and you'll like that one. They have a great mystery section, amongst others—Elmore Leonard-style stuff, the noir-type novels, if you like that kind of stuff.

We chatted, and he said that he had heard something that the NDP had been saying and he was happy to hear that. I said, "How's it going?" He said, "We're fine." I said, "No, how's the store going?" "Not so good." "Not so good? Why?" "The economy's recovering, but people don't have money in their pockets."

For me, a book is like food. It's as important. But the fact is, I have a reasonably good income, like the rest of us here. I didn't lose my job last year or the year before. I'm not struggling to work for minimum wage. The retail end of it, I was told, was slow. They were apprehensive; they were nervous. And you see, when Mr. McGuinty's HST takes another \$800 a year out of a family's budget, there's going to be even less money to spend in a

bookstore or, for that matter, a furniture store or an appliance store. The second-hand stores will start doing a brisker trade. The St. Vincent de Paul will become the retail shop of destination—and I have great respect for St. Vincent de Paul and Sally Ann and those types of thrift shops.

This government's proposal in this legislation is hardly a solution. People in Ontario want a chance to explain why. This government's denying them that chance. Dalton McGuinty is saying to those people who want to explain to Mr. McGuinty and his Liberal caucus why this legislation isn't a solution—what would Nancy Ruth say? He's Nancy Ruth-ing them in a very specific way.

I'm just sad. I'm saddened by this. This isn't the style that I know Liberal caucus members in their hearts believe in. I know there are Liberal caucus members who—I've seen them in committee. Many of them are mediocre; many of them are very, very good. I know that they share with me that excitement about the public participating. David Zimmer—when he's in committee, he listens very carefully. I watch him and I observe him working with participants. David Zimmer does a good job in committee. He has to follow his marching orders; I understand that. He's the parliamentary assistant. And there are others who do a good job in committee. Why are you helping to slam the door in the faces of those people who want to talk to you in that very important parliamentary and legislative process?

New Democrats are going to be voting against this time allocation motion. We'll probably be supporting the bill itself, but with sadness, with true sadness.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned till next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1803.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South-Weston / York-Sud- Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington-Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia-Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough-Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough Sud-Ouest	-
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margarett R. (LIB)	Scarborough-Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
		Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma-Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham-Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	<u>.</u>
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
		Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga-Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax-Pickering	The second secon
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale-High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky Hon / L'hon Leong (LIP)	Prince Edward-Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB) Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor-Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil ogestion du gouvernement
		Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby-Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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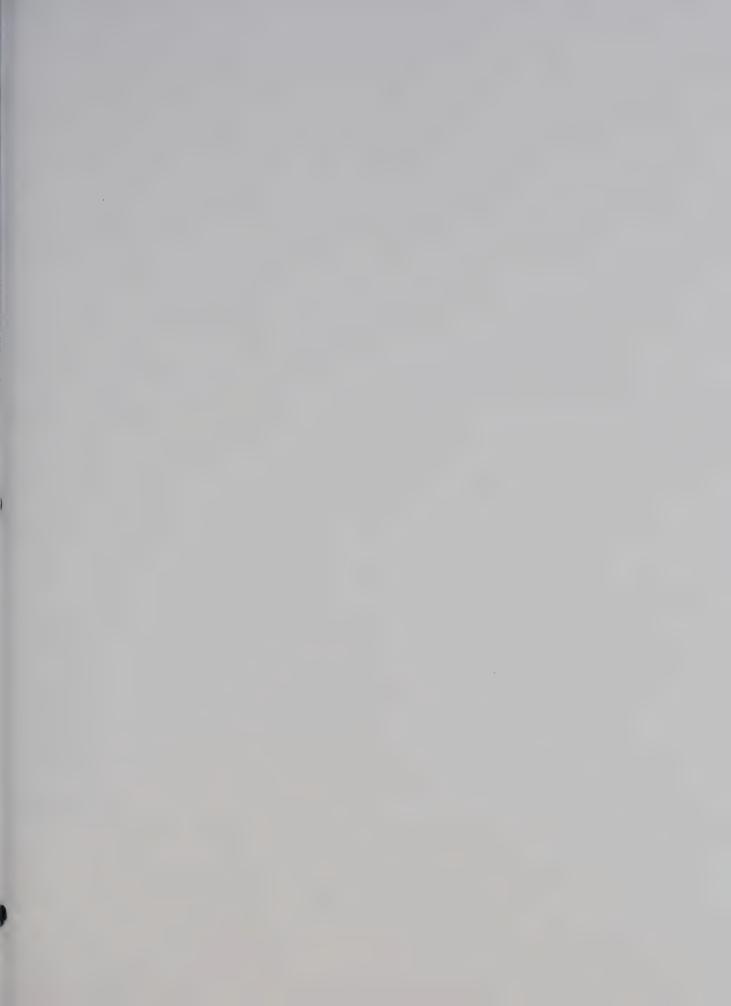
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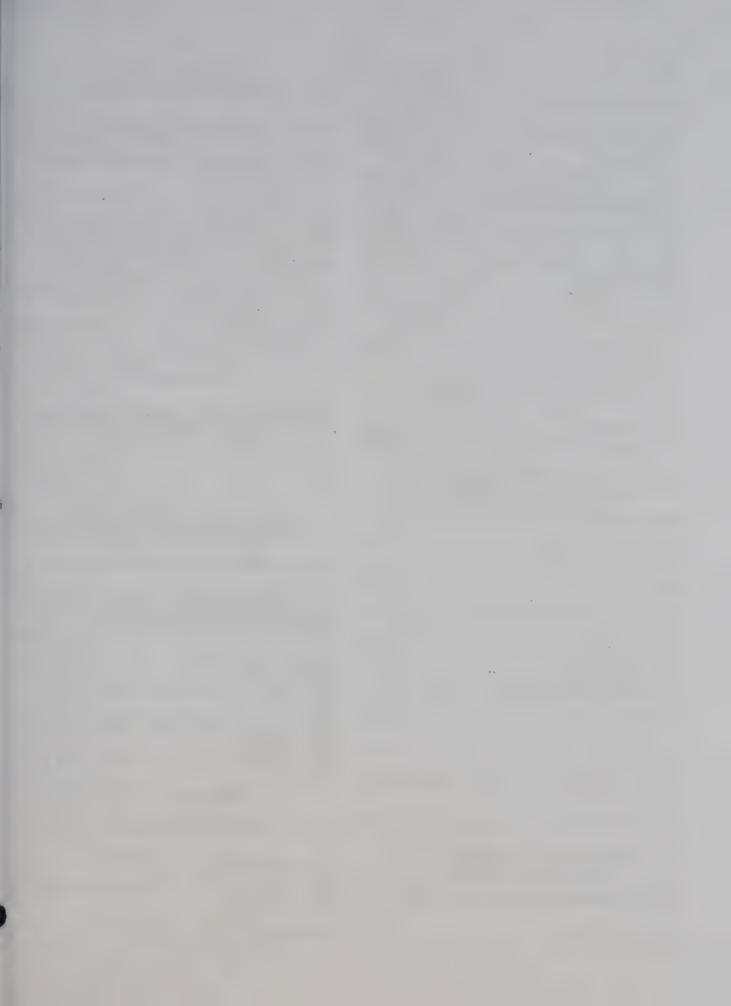
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Deuxième session, 39^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Monday 10 May 2010

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Lundi 10 mai 2010



Speaker Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk Deborah Deller Président L'honorable Steve Peters

Greffière Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 10 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 10 mai 2010

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I join with my Niagara colleagues in introducing a number of people from the Niagara group, who are here for Niagara Week at Queen's Park: Chairman Peter Partington, Councillor Judy Casselman, Mayor Dave Augustyn, Councillor Brian Baty, Mayor Henry D'Angela, Mayor Damian Goulbourne, Mayor Barbara Henderson and Mayor Ted Salci, along with staff members Mike Trojan, Neal Roberts, Ken Brothers, Patrick Gedge and Justin Watkins, in our gallery.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: May I introduce Mary Kyle and Tom O'Dowda, here from the great and glorious city of London, in the east gallery.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's my pleasure to introduce Elaine Capes, her daughters and a friend, who are visiting Queen's Park for the day.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: We'll shortly be joined by some 60 students from the grade 10 class of St. Augustine Catholic High School in Markham.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I would like to introduce the mother of Sarah Klapman; her dad, Jordan Klapman; and brother Daniel Klapman. They're in the public gallery to witness the work she does. Welcome.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Joining us today at Queen's Park will be the leaders from Muskoka Woods resort camp, and included will be my daughter, Sarah Witmer.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'd like to introduce Nile Kenny, who's here visiting from Kingston, together with his sister-in-law Liz Kenny from the Sarnia area.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and page Emma Allen, I'd like to welcome her mother, Lana Duncan; and her sister Georgia Allen, to the public galleries today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

On behalf of the member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan and page Mary McPherson, we'd like to welcome her mother, Tracy Shields, to the public galleries today.

Being introduced as well, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome back to the Legislature Peter Partington, the member from Brock from the 33rd Parliament, in

the east members' gallery. Peter, welcome back to Oueen's Park today.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'd like to introduce Daniel Bradbury, who's down from the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. He's in the west members' gallery listening today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. On Friday, you referred to generations of Canadians who fought the World Wars and who lived through the Depression, and told Ontario families today that they need to "step it up" and pay higher taxes. But, Premier, Ontario families have been stepping it up for years.

Does the Premier have any conception whatsoever of how much fees and taxes have gone up on an ordinary Ontario family since 2007 alone?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I encourage my honourable colleague to take a look at the actual wording, and he may want to check the record for himself in terms of what I said.

But I do want to take this opportunity to thank the Conservative Party for their continuing support for the HST. We have now—and I want to acknowledge this—received the support of Mike Harris, John Tory, Bob Runciman, Janet Ecker, Tony Clement and Jim Flaherty. The list goes on and on in terms of luminaries and leaders—of course, Prime Minister Harper himself. We simply could not move forward with this very important policy without them, and I want to acknowledge here and now the tremendous support we continue to receive from the Conservative Party.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: It's no surprise whatsoever that the Premier did not even try to attempt to answer our question about how much taxes and fees have gone up on ordinary, hard-working families since 2007 alone.

Let me tell you, Premier. An Ontario family's electricity and heating bills, their property assessment increases, auto insurance and university tuition, and the impact of the HST on this common basket of goods and services means the average Ontario family is paying \$2,700 more a year than they were in 2007.

Premier, how out of touch have you become? Surely you will agree that your attack on Ontario families' pocketbooks needs to come to an end.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I gather there's some creative mathematics at work over there.

My honourable colleague tells me that he's concerned about costs that families have got to contend with, so I ask him on behalf of Ontario families, why won't he join us in our effort to reduce the price of generic drugs in the province of Ontario? We want to reduce those drugs by 50%. My honourable colleague understands in particular there are still many, many Ontario families that pay for them. In fact, the largest growing number of workers in Ontario—this is not necessarily a positive development, but it's a growing number of workers—are without health plans through their workplace. They're paying out of pocket. So why wouldn't he join us in our effort to get those generic drug costs down? That's real and meaningful and would be of absolute benefit to our families.

Again I ask him, why won't he join us in our effort to reduce the price of generic drugs for Ontario families?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Quite frankly, the Premier should be embarrassed for his comments on Friday, when he seemed to describe Ontario families as complainers when he said, "We're not prepared to do difficult things"—from Friday, Premier. You must be completely out of touch not to understand the struggling Ontario families trying to cope with your electricity increases, your HST tax grab, increased auto insurance premiums and increased university tuitions. That adds up to some \$2,700 a year for an average family in the province of Ontario. How much do you think they can afford? If \$2,700 is not enough, how much do you want to take out of the pockets of hard-working Ontario families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There are a number of things that we've done and we'll continue to do to help Ontario families, and it would be nice if, at some point in time, we had it either acknowledged or supported by my honourable colleague. On January 1 of this year, 93% of all Ontarians received an income tax cut. My honourable colleague remains adamantly opposed to full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. That will save parents a half-day of daycare. Over the course of a year, we're talking about thousands and thousands of dollars in savings to Ontario families.

Again, I mentioned before that he is not prepared to support us in our effort to reduce drug costs. We're offering free HPV vaccines to all grade 8 girls; that saves a family \$550. Free chickenpox, meningitis and pneumococcal—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Again, the Premier refuses to acknowledge that his impact on the pocketbooks of hardworking, ordinary Ontario families now totals some \$2,700 a year, with more to come.

Let me take this down to some of the details, Premier. In 52 days, your HST tax grab is going to impact on the hydro bills and the home heating bills of Ontario seniors and Ontario families. Can the Premier please tell us what his calculations tell him about the impact of the HST on the electricity and home heating bills of the average Ontario family?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that my honourable colleague, through his actions of his party and his former leadership, is actually a very strong supporter, and I want to thank him as well, on behalf of Ontarians, for agreeing not to rescind the HST under any circumstances. It's very important to know that we have that stability and predictability.

I know that some of his party members are confused. I recall reading a story about his party members being confused about his position on this because he says he's against it, but he's also committing absolutely to keeping it in place. So I think it's important, for purposes of predictability and stability in Ontario public policy, that, together with all the former leadership of his party, he too is now fully supporting the HST in Ontario. Again, I thank him for that.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I suspect the Premier has not had a conversation with an ordinary pair of seniors in our province, with hard-working Ontario families who are paying the bills and seeing less in return—in short, after six and a half years in office, a Premier dramatically out of touch with the struggles of hard-working Ontario families.

Premier, the HST alone will add some \$300 to the electricity and home heating bills of ordinary, hard-working families. You put that on top of your assessment increases and we're looking at almost \$900 a year for a typical Ontario family just to keep their home. Premier, don't you think Ontario families are paying enough as it is? Will you call off your attack on the pocketbooks of ordinary, hard-working families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to thank my honourable colleague for his strong commitment to keeping the HST in place. I think it's important that Ontarians understand that commitment. They respect that commitment. My honourable colleague understands the need for stability when it comes to public policy and understands the need for predictability when it comes to Ontarians planning business decisions. I also want to reassure him that we will not take our eye off the ball when it comes to supporting our families. That's why, as part of our package of tax reforms, we've in fact reduced taxes for 93% of all Ontarians and we've eliminated the income tax entirely for our 90,000 lowest-income earners in our province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, a typical Ontario family that drives a Toyota Camry, by way of example, is facing some additional \$303 a year thanks to your HST tax grab. For a family that's driving a truck, it's \$490 a year more. Auto insurance increases on top of that, and that's for the

privilege of driving on some of the most clogged highways in the GTA—of any place in North America.

Premier, you've already increased taxes high enough; for the typical Ontario family, some \$2,700 a year. Please tell us that you're not that far out of touch and out of gas after six and a half years in office; please tell us today that your attack on the pocketbooks will finally come to an end.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to take this opportunity, because I think it's important that Ontarians understand just how strong the Conservative Party's support is for the HST. I want to thank Mike Harris; I want to thank Janet Ecker; I want to thank Tony Clement; I want to thank Jim Flaherty; I want to thank Senator Bob Runciman—without his support, we could not move ahead; I want to thank the Conservative government, led by Prime Minister Harper; and again, I want to thank my honourable colleague for his solemn commitment to maintain the HST, to keep that in place so that we have stability, predictability and sound public policy, because at the end of the day my honourable colleague understands that this is about 600,000 more jobs for the people of Ontario.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Premier has spent about a year hiding the true cost of the HST on families. Last week, we learned why: The average family will pay \$800 a year in new sales taxes. Will the Premier stop playing games and release his government's estimates on how much the HST will cost families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think I've heard this question before and I'm not sure that my answer is going to be substantially different from what it was. I will refer my honourable colleague to a number of documents that the Ministry of Finance has put out. This one has been out for at least half a year: It's called Ontario's Tax Plan for Jobs and Growth: Cutting Personal and Corporate Taxes and Harmonizing Sales Taxes. It's very helpful. One of the sections specifically covers the impact that this would have both on businesses and on individuals. I would again refer my honourable colleague to this particular document. It goes through different families and different scenarios and provides in some detail just how this is going to benefit Ontario, but especially when it comes to 600,000 more jobs for our families.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Last summer, we submitted a freedom-of-information request looking for how much the McGuinty government's new tax will cost for gas on families. The government admitted that they had the numbers but they refused to release them. So my question is this: What is the Premier afraid of? Why won't he tell families exactly how much his new tax is going to cost them in gas?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to refer my colleague to pages 24 and 25 of this particular document.

When it comes to a single parent on Ontario Works with two children, ages five and seven, our calculation is that the net impact will be positive, to the tune of \$585. For a single senior with a pension income of \$20,000, the positive net impact is \$105. For a single individual earning \$30,000, the positive net impact is \$255. For a couple earning \$70,000 with two children, ages five and 10, our calculation is that the positive net impact is \$365.

Again, we have done a lot of work making our best efforts to calculate the full impact of all of our tax reforms and we've laid that out for Ontarians now for close to a year.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We've submitted the request. There are some 10 documents that the government refuses to release, so we used StatsCan's economic model ourselves to estimate how much more families are going to be paying to fill up the gas tank under the McGuinty government's new HST. The average family with two kids is going to pay an astonishing \$232 more each and every year on gasoline alone. Is that the kind of impact the Premier was afraid of telling families about?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think we have some familiarity with NDP governments in power. We've had the experience here in Ontario where the tax commission recommended that we adopt the HST. That was their party's tax commission; they recommended that we adopt the HST. Now we have an example of another government in power today in Canada, an NDP government in Nova Scotia. What they've done is taken their 13% HST and raised that up to 15%. So if we want some sense of what would happen with respect to tax policy in Ontario, we know that they would both adopt the HST and likely increase the cost to Ontario families.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My mom told me that when you point your finger at somebody else, you've got to watch, because three more are pointing back at you. I think the Premier needs a piece of that advice.

For the average family with two or more kids, the reality is that they're going to have to pay \$232 more each and every year in taxes on their gas. That's on top of the new taxes just to turn on the lights. That's on top of the new taxes just to turn on the heat and keep the house warm. When was the Premier planning to tell families with kids that the new tax was also going to cost them \$232 more on their gas bills just to fill up the car?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: In addition to the other benefits that I've talked about before, I think it's important to understand that there's going to be a new \$260 sales tax credit for every low- and middle-income adult and child; that's over \$1,000 for a family of four. That is permanent. We've also doubled the Ontario senior homeowners' property tax credit, saving seniors up to \$500, which we think is very important.

I think it's important to take a look at the package of tax reforms in their entirety. We are reducing personal income taxes. We are putting in place new tax credits to help our low-income earners, and we also have special support for our seniors and for people in the north when it comes to their energy costs. We've tried to be as fair and balanced and thoughtful as we can, knowing that our shared desire as a society here is to create more jobs. That's what this is all about—600,000 more.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: For families in northern Ontario, the new tax on gas is going to cost them even more than the \$232. After all, many families in Thunder Bay or Timiskaming or Sudbury have to drive absolutely everywhere in everyday life. Will the Premier come clean with families in northern Ontario and tell them how much this new tax on gas is going to cost them every year?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague knows that we took that concern—and that is particularly a concern of northern Ontario families—into account. That's why we have made changes in our budget that speak specifically to that, not only to families but also to industry. We have this new northern industrial electricity rate program—a three-year, \$150-million plan to support qualifying large industrial facilities in the north. We know that's important to them. At the same time, when it comes to homeowners, we have also put in place a new benefit to help northerners because of the higher costs that are intrinsic to energy use in northern Ontario. We think that's fair, and that's why all of us together are providing that additional support. We are mindful of those particular costs, especially when it comes to northern Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, \$232 goes a long way to pay the bills; it buys a lot of groceries and helps with already sky-high hydro bills. If the Premier disagrees with our numbers, as he appears to do, why won't he simply stop fighting these freedom-of-information requests that we have in and release his own clear numbers?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: They've all been released for some time; it's just that my honourable colleague doesn't agree with them. I don't know if she has read them, but if she has, she certainly has come to the conclusion that she does not agree with them.

Fortunately, there will come a time very, very shortly when the rage associated with the rhetoric will abate and our new tax reforms will become the reality. Then people will have an opportunity for themselves to imagine and to experience exactly what is happening as a result of our changes to the tax reforms. We're very much looking forward to moving ahead with our tax reforms in their entirety and to giving people an understanding in a practical way.

My colleagues on both sides are saying that the world as we know it is coming to an end, but I want to thank them for their strong support for keeping the HST in place. I want to thank them again.

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is for the Premier. After months of telling Ontarians that they wouldn't have to make any sacrifices for the so-called revenue-neutral HST, on Friday he compared the HST to the ultimate sacrifice. When he did that, the Premier insulted families who have already been paying thousands more in taxes and fees since 2007 by saying we aren't paying enough or doing enough for the future of our children.

My question, Premier: Why did you insult veterans, and did you insult veterans, the serving military, families and all Ontarians out of arrogance, because you are out of touch with families, or both?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I would recommend to my honourable colleague that she actually take a look at the transcript. What worries me is that I think she might already have done that and in fact knows what I said.

Again, I want to thank so many in the Conservative Party for their continuing support for the HST, without whose support—I forgot John Baird, who is obviously a continuing important contributor to and supporter of all we've been able to do in this regard.

I also want to take the opportunity once again to thank Mr. Hudak himself. He has had a number of opportunities to speak to this, and said that he understands now that the single sales tax will help the recovery. He went on to say, "I agree that there's little sense in allowing two separate governments to apply two"—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: [Inaudible] decided to bring up my old friend John Baird. I can tell him something: I know John Baird, and you are no John Baird, sir. I can tell you another thing: You are no John Baird.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Again, he's no John Baird. John Baird would never have equated paying taxes with the ultimate sacrifice of war.

The Premier's new HST rhetoric insults families, who are finding they can't afford the HST and the McGuinty Liberals anymore. Families are paying \$2,700 more today than they were the second time you took office, in October 2007.

Why haven't you apologized to families, to veterans, to the people who are sacrificing right now in Afghanistan and to this entire province?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I would encourage my honourable colleague, whose level of enthusiasm and excitability are often to be admired, that it's always helpful if there is some foundation in fact for that excitability and enthusiasm, and I would recommend to my honourable colleague that she in fact take a look at the transcript so that she knows what she's talking about.

One more thing I want to say is that, again, it would not have been possible for us to move ahead with this difficult but essential public policy to create 600,000 jobs, not just for us but for our children, without the continuing support of the Conservative Party of Ontario, whether those who hold office today or those who held it before. On behalf of all Ontarians, I want to thank them for their continuing support.

PENSION REFORM

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. Two thirds of Ontario families don't have a pension at work. Tomorrow we'll be debating an NDP motion calling for the implementation of a public defined benefit pension plan that would be available to all these workers. Then, on Thursday, the insurance industry gets their say in the form of a private member's bill sponsored by the Liberal member from Peterborough. With our Ontario retirement plan, we in the NDP have come down firmly—firmly, I repeat—on the side of public, defined benefit pension plans.

When the votes are cast on Tuesday and Thursday, which side will the Premier be on?

1100

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I've had the opportunity to speak to this before and, again, I'm not sure I can offer much by way of interesting variety on the same issue. I will repeat much of what I said before.

I think it's a mistake for us to try to divide and conquer on this issue. I think public pension plans have an important and continuing role to play when it comes to helping us address a national challenge which has to do with the adequacy or inadequacy of retirement incomes.

I also believe instinctively that the private sector also has a role to play in that regard and I think it's a mistake for us to say that it's only going to be one side or the other that must assume some role in acting as part of the solution. I think the solution is going to have to come from both sides.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'm glad the Premier mentioned the private sector. Private retirement savings plans are sucking up \$8.4 billion more than contributors would pay if they were saving in a large public pension plan. That's \$8.4 billion going into the coffers of banks and insurance companies and not into the retirement savings of average Canadians.

I think it's time for some common sense. Is the Premier going to embrace a practical, cost-efficient solution and support the NDP Ontario retirement plan, or does he plan to divert billions out of the pockets of working people and seniors by embracing the private insurance industry plan?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm sure my colleague is not suggesting that somehow we collapse all existing private sector pension plans. I'm sure he's not suggesting that we substitute all existing private sector plans with a new public plan. I don't believe he's saying that.

What I'm saying is that this is a national challenge. It calls for a national response. We will continue to find

ways to work with the federal government. I'm glad to see that Minister Flaherty seems to be taking a greater interest in this matter at this point in time. Minister Duncan not too long ago met with his counterparts from across the country and together we are finding ways to grapple with this.

Again, I commend the NDP for the positive proposal that they are putting forward, but I would suggest to them that it should not come at the exclusion of any other possibilities as well.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Guelph-based Linamar Corp. is one of Ontario's largest manufacturers of auto parts. Last week it was reported that Linamar had forged an alliance with a German-based company to build wind turbine parts in my hometown of Guelph to supply customers all across North America. This is fantastic news for my community and I believe it supports our government's efforts to make Ontario a hub for clean energy investment.

We're hearing more and more stories each day of clean energy projects taking shape in Ontario and around the world. Ontarians want to know that we are making progress and delivering results. Minister, we've heard the projections about jobs. Are you seeing results?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Absolutely, in communities right across this province. I am personally very excited to see this level of interest that our clean energy plan has created. Stories like Linamar are just one example of the progress we're making to be a world leader when it comes to clean energy investments. There's no question we're creating a buzz around this world in the global energy economy. Ontario is really creating a buzz, really creating a lot of interest out there. In fact, last week our government and the Ontario Power Authority announced the first projects under our feed-in-tariff program are now online. These facilities turn waste into emission-free electricity and are today supplying power to Ontario's power grid. Both projects are located in eastern Ontario. One of those projects is located on a dairy farm and will be converting biogas into clean energy—enough power for 400

Our vision is becoming a reality—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: That's terrific news, Minister, and I always love to hear about good-news stories from the dairy industry. It's great for Ontario that we're seeing such early results. It's good to see such enthusiasm for clean energy in Ontario and the international attention it's creating.

Despite how positive this is, there are skeptics out there—some across the aisle—who are asking about the cost Ontarians are seeing on their electricity bill. They look at all this investment in clean energy and know it is the right thing to be doing, but they're also concerned about their pocketbook and the impact these investments will have on them. Can the minister assure us that we are making the most of our investments today and that that will benefit us well into the future?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Seven years ago, we inherited a system where frankly the supply was not enough to meet the demand, so we've had to invest in building new generation across this province. We've been investing in building that new generation. More than that, we've been investing in ensuring that the new generation we bring online is clean energy. Our clean energy plan is supporting jobs and growth and expanding this clean energy sector here in Ontario. In fact, we're projecting 50,000 jobs being created over the next three years, in these plans alone. The feed-in tariff is bringing in \$9 billion in investments: That's supporting 20,000 jobs. The agreement with the Samsung-led consortium is bringing \$7 billion of investments: That's supporting 16,000 jobs. Since 2003, we've brought online over 8,000 megawatts of new supply: That's 20% of our current capacity. We've got things in place right now-

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Premier. Premier, in just 52 days, the HST will begin cutting into family budgets. For months, the McGuinty Liberals said the HST will be revenue-neutral. But Dalton McGuinty recently admitted he knew Ontario families will be paying hundreds of dollars a year more because of the HST. Premier, what other surprises that will cost Ontario families have you got hidden up your sleeve?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I know this will come as a surprise to the member opposite, but we've cut income taxes in this province. As a matter of fact, we cut income taxes on January 1—something that you voted against. I want to share with the good people of Ontario that there are new tax credits that are coming in. There are transition cheques that will start for many people as early as this June. There's a new GST rebate that is going to start in August that will be paid quarterly. There are increased tax credits, particularly for seniors, where we're doubling the senior property tax credit from \$250 to \$500. Because of the work of the Minister of Finance, we're also expanding the number of people who will be able to see relief on their taxes in regard to the property taxes they pay, either as an owner or as a renter.

I know, for some people opposite, these are a surprise, but they're exactly the measures you've been voting against. I can tell you that when the good people of Ontario hear about that-

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: If I can remind the Premier and the minister, they're the ones who cut the property tax credit that Ernie Eves put in place that was there for seniors. A PC amendment to the budget bill proves that Dalton McGuinty was making it up when he blamed John Robarts for severance packages to tax collectors. The triggering provision for severance is in legislation, not the collective agreement. You could have amended the law to clarify when someone is dismissed and when they are not, to protect Ontario taxpayers from paying \$25 million for people who will not miss a day of work. You could have written it into the CITCA agreement. BC did it, and they aren't paying severances. Why did you tell Ontario families your hands were tied when they weren't?

Hon. John Wilkinson: The business community in this province today spends some \$500 million a year trying to administer a two-tax system, the two-tax system that the member opposite believes that we should keep. He believes that the status quo is the right thing to do in the 21st century, when everyone in Ontario knows that the economy has fundamentally changed. So we're taking action to reduce the cost to business of some \$500 million. And where is that cost? It's in the price of goods and services in the province of Ontario. That is a hidden tax, a hidden cost. We're removing that. It is something that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce has asked our government to do, consistently. That's why they're so delighted that we're taking that action.

It means, as well, that our government will save some \$100 million each and every year going forward because we will not have two governments tripping over themselves trying to tax the same transaction twice when once will do.

1110

WASTE DIVERSION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Last year, in the middle of the recession, the McGuinty government imposed a new electronics tax on Ontarians: \$13 more for computers, \$12 for monitors, \$10 for televisions. The government promised this \$40-million tax would fund recycling of e-waste, but today, we read that e-waste recycling has fallen 60% shy of its target, that most e-waste is going to landfills or being illegally exported and that the minister doesn't even know what went wrong.

Minister, should we be adding e-waste to climate change inaction and Transit City on the list of broken

McGuinty environmental promises?

Hon. John Gerretsen: First of all, the member well knows that this is not a tax; it's a fee that goes to the Ontario Electronic Stewardship council in order to make sure that electronic waste is properly collected, properly

transported and properly recycled.

Let's look at the positive side of it: 17,000 tonnes of material that used to end up in our landfill sites, contaminating those landfill sites, are, in fact, being diverted from the landfill sites. More can be done, and that's precisely why we're taking a very close look at the Waste Diversion Act, to see how it can be improved to make sure that all of this electronic waste does not end up in our landfill sites and is properly recycled.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, I am somewhat startled by the Pollyanna perspective of the minister. Nonetheless, it's pretty clear what has gone wrong. You've failed to set and monitor strict guidelines for recycling companies. You've allowed companies to unsafely recycle, sell and export highly toxic substances. Government has given one private agency, Ontario environmental stewardship, monopoly power over the distribution of e-waste through a top-down quota system that penalizes good companies.

When will the government fix this program and stop making Ontarians pay for a complete failure to deal with electronic waste?

Hon. John Gerretsen: It is not a failure; that's number one. It's absolutely not a failure: 17,000 tonnes are being diverted from landfill sites that otherwise would have ended up there.

Can we do better? Absolutely. That's why we are working with Waste Diversion Ontario and the Ontario Electronic Stewardship council to make sure that the waste does not end up in our landfill sites. That's why we're working on a new act to make the companies more accountable and to apply the principle of extended producer responsibility to all of those companies that are actually producing the material. That's the only way to do it. The new act will be coming forth, and the kind of difficulties that have been encountered by the program will be overcome.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, everyone has the right to a safe workplace. We are all familiar with the common hazards that could cause injures such as slips, trips and falls, but a safe workplace is one that is also free from harassment and violence. According to a 2004 report commissioned by Statistics Canada, 17% of violent incidents in Canada occur in the workplace. This represents about 356,000 incidents of workplace violence per year across Canada.

Just before this House rose last December, a bill was passed which addresses the issue of violence and harassment in the workplace. Minister, can you explain what this legislation is all about and how it will help to make Ontario workplaces even safer?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I'd like to thank the member for the question. I'm very pleased to discuss the landmark legislation that we passed here in this Legislature last December. The amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act will come into effect on June 15. They will require employers now to increase their protection of workers from workplace violence and harassment. Employers will be required to assess the risks in their workplace for violence and develop new workplace violence and harassment policies and programs. They will also have to take reasonable precautions to protect workers from domestic violence entering into the workplace. Additionally, workers will be allowed to refuse work if they feel that they are at risk of physical injury.

I know that I speak for all Ontarians when I say this is a very welcome, positive step for all Ontario workers.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you, Minister, for your response. The implementation of this legislation is indeed a positive step forward and a clear sign that our government takes workplace health and safety seriously. We all know that workplace violence has an immeasurable emotional impact on workers and their families. There are also negative impacts on businesses in terms of lost-time injuries, low productivity and absenteeism. It will help prevent injuries. This new legislation will protect our workers, create healthier workplaces and save our businesses money.

Minister, you mentioned that this legislation will take effect this summer. Can you please explain to me and this House what your ministry is doing to help employers prepare for the implementation of these new regulations?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: The member asks a very good question. Over the past number of months, my ministry, working with our health and safety partners, has been working closely with employers, providing them with a number of resources to help them comply with this very progressive legislation.

One of these resources developed by the Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario is a workplace violence tool box. This tool box helps employers to assess and control risks of workplace violence in a number of situations, like when an employee is working alone, or in a high crime area, or with an unstable client. The tool box will also provide them with specific information on dealing with domestic violence in the workplace.

I encourage everyone in this House to visit my ministry's website, where they can access the tool box and learn more about this exciting new resource.

POLICE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, as you're aware, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police are at Queen's Park today to get action on some very important policing issues. You are well aware that one issue is a request to allow police officers real-time access to Ontario's driver's licence photos. It is very important that police have the tools they need to be able to positively identify drivers in a very effective manner. Will the OACP get action on real-time access, or will they go home empty-handed today?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: It's very, very good that the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police are here today. It is not only their Queen's Park day, but it is also the first day of Police Week. We welcome everyone to become actively involved in their local municipal police services.

I have to tell you, when the chiefs of police come to the McGuinty government, they rarely go away emptyhanded.

I look forward to working with the Minister of Transportation on this issue. We understand the importance of

the chiefs of police and police services members having the tools to keep Ontario safe, and we will continue to work with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?
Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Maybe you could begin by answering the question.

Currently, Ontario's police services do not have timely access to MTO driver's licence photos. An OPP pilot project has already proven the value of adding this important policing tool, and some of the benefits are: A person with a suspended licence would not be able to use another person's ID to verbally mislead the police and continue driving; the number of people wrongfully charged due to false ID would be reduced; correct ID has been proven to enhance officer safety, allowing for improved assessment.

I know the MTO is involved in this, but this is about public safety and good policing in our communities.

As Minister of Community Safety, will you commit to this House today and to the OACP that you will do your part to make sure officers get real-time access to driver's licence photos immediately?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: There's absolutely no question that the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, the Ontario Provincial Police Association and the Police Association of Ontario have this government's commitment that we will work with them.

It is very important that we continue to support our police services across the province of Ontario. That's why we made major investments—\$93 million with regard to guns and gangs. That's why we've put 2,000 more police officers on the street. That's why, along with the groups I mentioned, we will continue to advocate to the federal government to continue their community police officer program in perpetuity, not for five years.

1120

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Hamilton residents are sick and tired of their hospital services being cut as executive salaries skyrocket. Hamilton Health Sciences' McMaster site is cutting adult services in the ER and intensive care units, leaving only obstetrics and gynecology. Does the Premier believe that these cuts to hospital services will not harm patients?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: What I can say is that we continue to find ways to increase our hospital funding. That's what we've been doing for seven years straight now.

One of the things that we are doing, of course, in order to ensure that we can get the maximum efficiency out of every possible dollar that we invest in health care, is to lower our drug costs. There is actually a connection between available levels of funding through our health care system, generally speaking, and what we are doing here in our effort to lower drug costs.

We want to take all those savings and reinvest those in the health care system, including making sure that there are more drugs available for Ontario families. So I would ask my honourable colleague to join us in our effort to reduce the cost of drugs for Ontario families.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm talking about emergency room services for women and their children at birth; that's what I'm talking about. Hamilton's three chiefs of obstetrics and gynecology are telling the LHIN that these cuts leave women in jeopardy. Doctors are petitioning the LHIN, calling the cuts "medically unworkable and unsafe." This is the very plan that is being investigated by Ontario's Ombudsman, and the chief coroner is investigating tragic deaths related to other hospital cuts that this LHIN has made, specifically in Niagara.

When will the Premier take some responsibility for protecting the people of this province from short-sighted and medically risky cuts to our health care system?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that for the Hamilton Health Sciences centre we've increased funding by \$150 million as base funding since 2003. That's a 28% increase and they've done a remarkable job there when it comes to increasing access and turning the patients around more quickly and in a healthier state.

When it comes to the wait times, knee surgeries are down 281 days by way of waiting times, hip surgeries are down 278 days, angiographies are down 64 days, cancer surgeries reduced by 17 days, angioplasty down by 32 days, and MRIs down by 13 days.

I think that, working together, the facts show that we have made real progress, and we will continue to find ways to work with the good people in Hamilton to ensure that we can always find ways to improve the quality of their care.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Rick Johnson: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry regarding the recently announced proposed new approach to forest tenure and pricing in our province.

We are all too familiar with the struggles of rural and northern communities that rely on the resources of our crown forests, and I believe that proposing a new approach to tenure and pricing will help revitalize the industry. The current forest tenure system was designed years ago to give primary consuming mills responsibility to manage Ontario's forests in exchange for long-term wood supply. This has made it difficult for new players to enter the market and has left communities vulnerable during economic downturns.

Could the minister please tell the House how the proposed approach to tenure and pricing will help revitalize the forest industry?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much for the

question. I very much appreciate it.

There is no doubt that we do face some daunting chal-

lenges in the forestry industry, but I strongly believe that we can revitalize the industry and our communities by restoring prosperity through a new forest economy based on new products, new markets and new processing. For those reasons, 10 days ago my ministry proposed a new framework to modernize Ontario's tenure and pricing system which we see as a critical step in transforming the forest economy and putting Ontario's wood back to work. This proposed framework seeks to establish a system that is more responsive to market forces by generating greater competition in the pricing allocation of our crown timber resources. These proposed changes will give Ontarians a more active role in the management of their crown forests and will provide local and aboriginal communities more involvement in how these forests are managed and how the wood is sold.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?
Mr. Rick Johnson: Thank you for informing the
House about the proposed preferred framework for mod-

ernizing Ontario's tenure and pricing system.

It is certainly reassuring that there has been movement towards a modernized and improved system for administering our timber resources for long-term prosperity. This is very important news for all residents of Ontario, as this new framework will create opportunities that will generate the right level of investment to ensure that the crown forest continues to be renewed and enhanced. Putting wood to work will create additional jobs and economic prosperity for Ontarians.

While I believe this proposed framework is the right direction to go in, I would like further clarity on it. Could the minister please tell the House how our government is planning to implement this proposed framework, and what are the major differences between the old system

and the new modernized system?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It's a very good question. Certainly this bold proposal is the most comprehensive overhaul of Ontario's wood allocation system in decades and it certainly fits in with our government's plan to position Ontario's forestry sector as an innovative global player in the 21st century.

The implementation of this proposed system would follow a series of consultations with industry and environmental groups, community leaders, forestry stakeholders, forest management workers, aboriginal communities, organizations, labour, business and the public all across Ontario. This new system—the modernized system—would establish new local forest management corporations across the province, it would introduce more competitive markets to improve the access to crown timber and it would implement a new revenue model that would ensure stability through various economic cycles.

With the input from Ontarians, I believe this system will help to restore the competitiveness of Ontario's forest sector, because we know—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

PEDIATRIC FORENSIC PATHOLOGY INQUIRY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Attorney General. Louise Reynolds has lived a nightmare caused

by Dr. Charles Smith's flawed reports. Dr. Charles Smith concluded that Ms. Reynolds stabbed her daughter more than 80 times. Ms. Reynolds spent two years in prison. Her daughter had been attacked by a dog. William Mullins-Johnson spent 12 years in prison for the alleged rape and murder of his four-year-old niece. His niece had died from natural causes.

You said you'd have answers very soon. Given your track record, "very soon" is not good enough for people's whose lives have been torn apart. Minister, you've had enough time; you've had a year and a half. When is very soon? When exactly will these people have some closure?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'm very pleased that this government fully supported the Goudge inquiry, and moved expeditiously to take prosecutions which in many cases had happened many, many years before, decades before, reopened them, got them before the Court of Appeal, and got them heard as quickly as possible. We continue to do so. We have taken up Justice Goudge's suggestion that we determine whether many different people in many different sets of circumstances could avoid having to start with the civil justice system, which would give them a full hearing but might take a long time, and come up with a short, quick, fair approach to some of their compensation issues, and we're doing that. We've been getting ongoing advice and should have that very soon.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Sherry Sherret-Robinson was convicted of killing her four-month-old son after Dr. Charles Smith testified against her. She spent one year in prison before being exonerated. As a result of the initial charge, Ms. Sherret-Robinson was placed on the child abuse registry. Despite being found not guilty, her name is still on that registry. Minister, Ms. Sherret-Robinson has been a victim of Dr. Charles Smith. She's been forced to wait for 18 months while you examine a possible compensation process. Now she is being pushed from department to department to get off this registry. Ms. Sherret-Robinson wants her name erased from the registry. She deserves an answer from your compensation committee now. Will you address her concerns now?

1130

Hon. Christopher Bentley: In the questions that my friend has had, both today and the other day, he has clearly outlined the challenge. There are many different people convicted at many different times who have suffered different series of injustices or issues. Coming up with one quick compensation approach for all of those in disparate circumstances is challenging. All of them have the right to the civil process, but we're trying to come up with, on Justice Goudge's suggestion, something that is quick, fair and can apply flexibly to all. We've got legal advice. We're getting ongoing legal advice, and that's why we're moving as expeditiously as we can to address these very different cases and circumstances.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier: MPAC is offering its employees no wage increase for the next two years, yet within the last six months MPAC told municipalities that it had to increase its charges to them because of the cost of rising wages. Premier, will you make MPAC either pass on the higher fees to its employees or tell MPAC to roll back their fees to municipalities?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: As I understand, there is a tentative agreement that has been reached between the parties, and out of respect for the labour relations process, I cannot and will not comment further. But our Ministry of Labour mediator has been working very closely with the parties, I say to the member. As I've always said in this House, and the member has heard me often, collective agreements are the best agreements. They're the most stable; they're the most productive agreements; they're the fairest agreements.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Back to the Premier: Given what you've said about collective agreements, one wouldn't have thought that you'd bring in the last budget with all the interference that's in there with regard to collective agreements—massive interference.

You say you're committed to transparency, fairness and all the other good things in life. Will you tell MPAC to roll back that charge for expenses they plan to avoid and give the money back to the municipalities?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I'm sure the member is aware, or I'll make him aware, that MPAC is an organization that is funded by the municipalities. All of us are paid with public tax dollars. We have a role to play, be it politicians, workers, employers or employees. We're all pulling together to help Ontario become stronger.

But as I said in my earlier response, out of respect for the labour relations process, it wouldn't be appropriate for me to comment further. I do understand that a tentative agreement has been reached by the parties. I'll allow the parties to do their work, of course with assistance from the Ministry of Labour through our mediation department.

TOURISM

Mr. Reza Moridi: My question is to the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Summer is just around the corner, and it's a much-anticipated break for students and their families. Last year, many Ontarians chose a "staycation" and discovered their own province. There is a clear need to showcase all that Ontario has to offer. There is so much for Ontarians to discover about the natural beauty, outdoor activities, great cultural attractions and urban experiences in their own province. How are you promoting Ontario and everything it has to offer to families that are interested in travelling within the province this summer?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the question, honourable member for Richmond Hill. There's no doubt

about it: Summer is just around the corner, and summer is the best time to promote tourism in Ontario. We have a number of great festivals and events taking place across the province. To name a few, the Ottawa Tulip Festival, the international air show and Summer Fest in Windsor, and the Carassauga multicultural festival are all great, family-friendly events. Families can also discover great Ontario attractions, like the Butterfly Conservatory in Niagara Falls, Science North in Sudbury and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. This summer is another great opportunity for families to discover that there's truly no place like Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Reza Moridi: Promoting Ontario also requires this government to make valuable information available to those travelling across the province. Informed travellers make the best choices, informed travellers will have better experiences, and better experiences give travellers one more reason to return to Ontario.

Families need access to more information about our festivals and events, summer attractions, outdoor activities and family-friendly events. Such information will ensure that families have the opportunity to discover all that Ontario has to offer. Minister, what steps are you taking to ensure that such comprehensive information is within reach for summer travellers?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the member again for the question. Yes, comprehensive information is important for all travellers. Such information is also key to promoting Ontario. The 2010 festivals and events guide is a great tool for all visitors. With the guide, visitors can experience breathtaking sites and many great festivals and events. Copies of the guide are available at travel information centres, destination marketing organizations and festival and event offices. The information is also online.

The member from Richmond Hill is right: Informed visitors will have better experiences, and better experiences mean more return visits to Ontario. Tourism is one of the economic drivers of Ontario and we are committed to promoting it.

POLICE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Since I didn't get an answer from the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, I wonder if I could ask the question to the Minister of Transportation. It involves the fact that the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police are here at Queen's Park today, and I said earlier that they have some important policing issues they'd like to address. I'm not sure if you are well aware, Minister, but the Minister of Community Safety certainly is, that one of their key issues is a request to allow police officers real-time access to the files of MTO for the driver's licence photos. It's important to the policing community because it can handle policing in a more efficient and effective manner and help the policing community overall.

I'm wondering, Minister, if you would respond to the question: Will you, in fact, allow the OACP—will you respond to their action, and ask for real-time access as quickly as possible for them? What I'm asking for is to change the system we have today to allow the request from the OACP.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Certainly, I'm happy to chime in and support what the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services says. As it happens, I met with the chiefs of police this morning and had the opportunity to talk about this very issue. As the member opposite knows, there are 500 of these units already being deployed in the province used in police cars. We've committed to another 300 units. I said to the chiefs of police this morning that it makes eminent sense to me that we would continue to work with them to find options. It may not be that we need to have one of these pieces of technology in every single vehicle. There may be a way of having them deployed in a different way. The issue is that the pictures that are in the MTO database can be used at the roadside. I completely understand that, and we're going to be working with the chiefs of police organization to make that happen. As I say, we're expanding within the next three months to another 300 units.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The time for question period has ended.

I just remind any member who's participating in the wheelchair challenge that I need to meet with them after question period in the side office just to make sure we have the logistics cleared.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1138 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NURSES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: It's kind of a sad reason I stand here today. This is National Nursing Week. However, last Thursday, we found out at the Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital that 26 nursing positions were being eliminated. Sandra Tansley, the bargaining unit president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, said, "Instead of celebrating, we're mourning the loss of 26 positions."

The government continues to brag all the time about the nursing positions they've added; the reality is, nothing could be further from the truth. Here's a hospital that has been newly reconstructed and redeveloped with a lot of government funding over the years, a lot of municipal funding. At the same time, we've seen a billion dollars wasted in the eHealth scandal, we've seen \$25 million spent on HST severance for tax collectors who aren't going to lose a day's work and we've seen this government bring in the health premium, yet here we are in the province of Ontario this year, and over 2,000

jobs have been eliminated—nursing positions have been eliminated in the province of Ontario under this government. They like to blame the LHINs, they like to blame the hospital boards of directors, but the reality is, it falls solely on the responsibility of the Premier's office.

This is a very, very sad day in the city of Orillia and area to think that we're losing those positions. We've already got long-term-care facilities that are maxed out; we've got waiting lists on each and every one them. Community care access is down in numbers because of the overload, and here we are laying off another 26 people. This is a sad day in the province of Ontario for this reason.

NURSING WEEK

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It is with great pleasure that I rise today during the first day of Nursing Week to pay tribute to the extremely hard-working and dedicated nurses in this province.

In 1971, May 12, the birthday of nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale, was designated as International Nurses Day. Florence Nightingale was a British nurse during the Crimean War. Her passion, dedication and activism are what turned nursing into a profession.

Nursing Week gives us an opportunity to celebrate our largest group of health care providers—our nurses—for their outstanding patient-centred care and dedication to advancing and strengthening the health care system.

The United Nations has declared 2010 the International Year of the Nurse.

Nurses are the backbone of our health care system, and our government has hired more than 10,000 nurses since we took office in 2003. We've also made Ontario one of the few jurisdictions in the world to guarantee full-time job opportunities for nursing graduates. Over 8,300 new nursing graduates have been matched to job opportunities since this program started.

A special thank you to all of the nurses in my riding of Oak Ridges-Markham and to the following vice-presidents and chief nursing officers from the three York regional hospitals: Beth Snyder from York Central Hospital, Julia Scott from Markham Stouffville Hospital and Annette Jones from Southlake Regional Health Centre. Thank you for your commitment and for strengthening health care in Ontario.

VETERANS

Mr. Frank Klees: I was honoured to attend the Veteran Appreciation Day in Aurora this past Saturday where Mayor Phyllis Morris made this proclamation, which reads in part as follows:

"Whereas veterans are honoured in communities across Ontario in the weeks surrounding Remembrance Day each November 11th; and ...

"Whereas Ontarians are deeply indebted to the courageous men and women who defend our country and who have given their lives for the cause of peace; and

"Whereas a Veteran Appreciation Day will provide a timely reminder of the importance of honouring those who guard our freedoms and ensure our security; and

"Whereas it is an important opportunity to applaud the families whose strong support of our soldiers is vital to their ability to do such a demanding and critical job; and

"Whereas we recognize all veterans for their service to Canada and their achievements and sacrifices for Canadians; and

"Whereas veterans have made a distinct contribution to Aurora by sharing their experiences with young people and enriching the life of the community; and

"Whereas Aurora has a proud history of military service, and our veterans make up a valuable part of our town.

"Therefore be it resolved that, on behalf of the members of council of the corporation of the town of Aurora, I, Mayor Phyllis Morris, do hereby proclaim May 8, 2010, as Veteran Appreciation Day to enable the town council and residents of Aurora to recognize and honour the sacrifices of veterans and their work in the community."

MALE VIOLENCE

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I rise today to commend all those secondary students from the schools in London and St. Thomas district who participated in the march against male violence. Over 250 secondary students joined together to demonstrate unity and solidarity in protesting male violence. This event is in its 20th year and has proven to be a resounding success in raising money and awareness of this issue and encouraging discussion and advocacy on eradicating male violence.

This year, the students did a tremendous job in raising a substantial amount of money, to the tune of \$7,000. Each student participating in this event showed drive and initiative by meeting or surpassing the \$20 pledge minimum. It's the determination and dedication demonstrated by these students that gives us hope that the future is bright and peaceful for all human beings, no matter their gender, race, religion, socio-economic status or sexual orientation.

It's my privilege to stand here today and commend London and St. Thomas students for promoting human rights and fighting for a better future for everyone who lives in this beautiful province.

ALLISTON HORNETS HOCKEY TEAM

Mr. Jim Wilson: It's with great enthusiasm that I rise today to applaud the Alliston Hornets hockey team on their victory Friday night over the Belle River Canadiens, making them the Ontario Hockey Association's junior C champions.

By all accounts, Friday's game at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre was a nail-biter. Despite a late-game comeback by the Canadiens, the Hornets stepped up their efforts, refusing to allow the series to go to game seven. Alliston's goalie, Rob Rankin, and the entire defensive line cranked it up in the dying moments of the game to win the series four games to two. This is the second Clarence Schmalz Cup that the Hornets have brought home to Alliston in the past three years and it confirms their standing as a force to be reckoned with among Ontario's junior C hockey teams.

People across New Tecumseth are cheering today and are extremely proud of their hometown team. Without question, the Hornets' clean and upbeat approach to hockey has gained them an admirable reputation throughout Ontario.

I'd like to salute Tony Veltri of madhunt.com and Matthew Talbot of the Alliston Herald for giving live updates on Twitter right through the series. It was a great way to keep everyone who couldn't make the road games on the edge of their seats.

I think I speak for all members of the Legislature in congratulating the Alliston Hornets on being provincial champions and for the immeasurable amount of time, commitment and sacrifice made to their sport of hockey. Congratulations.

1310

TAXATION

Mr. Howard Hampton: Over the past couple of weeks I have met with a number of chiefs and leaders from First Nation communities, and they all ask the same question. They all ask, how could a government which over and over again boasts about having a special relationship with First Nations go into the back room and sign the harmonized sales tax agreement, which has the effect of removing the point-of-sale exemption from First Nations? How could a government do that, with no dialogue, no discussion, no negotiation and no consultation whatsoever with First Nation leadership?

The second question they ask is this: When this government announced the HST, it also announced a number of exemptions from the HST. So First Nation leaders are wondering, how could the government negotiate such an agreement, arrange in the negotiation for a number of exemptions, and totally leave First Nations out of the picture? Since the presentation of the HST, the government has moved to create two more exemptions: an exemption on the resale of homes that cost up to \$400,000 and what we call the Tim Hortons exemption. First Nations are wondering again, how could this happen and they be completely forgotten by this government? These are questions that need to be answered.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Dave Levac: Over the last year, I've had the opportunity of witnessing an historic moment in the province of Ontario. In the riding of Brant, we've seen Brant, Brantford, Six Nations, Mississaugas of the New Credit, and then lately invited Haldimand and Norfolk to join us in an opportunity in the province of Ontario

because of the Green Energy Act. What we've decided to do as a region is declare ourselves the green energy hub. By doing so, we're going to have an opportunity to deal with Six Nations, New Credit, Brantford, Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk, working together under the auspices of an organization—through the chambers of commerce—that says that we can all come together and work for green energy jobs.

Once we do this, we're going to be the hub of the hub, I like to call it, because Ontario is open for business around the world. We're now seeing companies from around the world land in Ontario, dealing with green energy jobs. We have decided that we're going to come together. We're sitting at the table together and we're

negotiating together.

We also have another historic moment, where Brant and Six Nations have signed a business accord that they will be dealing with each other on an ongoing basis. Once we see the end of this negotiation, we are going to be seeing the beginning of the green energy hub. I look forward to continuing to work with all the elected officials in that area. As we move forward, we will be the best place to live, work and raise a family.

BEN VICCARI

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I rise today to bid a sad but very fond farewell to Ben Viccari, a remarkable man whom I had the privilege of knowing while we were both at OMNI television and who passed away last Thursday at the age of 91. A consummate writer, journalist, broadcaster, documentary filmmaker, philosopher and outspoken supporter of Canadian multiculturalism, Ben was born in 1918 in London, England, to an Italian father and an English mother.

Passionate about words, literature and history, Ben earnestly began his journalism career in Great Britain, but the Second World War was to put his journalistic ambitions on hold. Ben joined Britain's Royal Artillery and later the Allied Control Commission in Italy.

Shortly after moving to Canada in 1947, his passion for journalism rekindled. Ben became a vocal advocate for the newly emerging ethnic media in Canada. He first established an Italian weekly newspaper called Oggi Canada, then built his own public relations firm. He became president of the Toronto Press Club and the Canadian Ethnic Media Association.

The recipient of numerous journalism awards, Ben lectured at the Harvard Business School and many Canadian universities and colleges. He did not sit on his laurels, and worked to the very end of his life.

I am sure that my colleagues from all sides of the House will join me in recognizing Ben Viccari's remarkable contributions to our province and our country. Farewell, Ben.

VETERANS

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Yesterday, the parade of Canadian veterans at Apeldoorn in the Netherlands

marked the last day of official celebrations marking the 65th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day. But the debt of gratitude owed to the veterans of the First Canadian Army Corps for pushing back and defeating the Nazi forces in the spring of 1945 is far from repaid or forgotten.

VE Day has been surrounded by many events in both the Netherlands and Canada as Canadian veterans and Dutch on both sides of the Atlantic remember the final days of the Second World War. More than 7,200 Canadians died bringing freedom to the Dutch, and that nation has remained forever grateful.

Following the devastation of the war, many Dutch citizens were forced to seek new lives in other countries. Canada became the country of choice. The Dutch had come to know and love their Canadian liberators. They were trusted and respected as the compassionate army that found them nearly starved into submission by the Nazi-imposed "hungry winter." In addition, it was the Canadian government that had offered safe haven in Ottawa to the Dutch royal family. Princess Margriet was born in exile in 1943 but remained a Dutch citizen through the special efforts of the Canadian and Dutch governments. The princess returns to Canada this week for a week-long visit.

The Dutch relationship with Canada's veterans will endure as we continue to say thank you to the "Canadese Soldaten."

Remarks in Dutch.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ERAMOSA KARST FEEDER LANDS PROTECTION ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA PROTECTION DE LA ZONE NOURRICIÈRE D'ERAMOSA KARST

Mr. Hudak moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 59, An Act to protect the feeder lands of the Eramosa Karst / Projet de loi 59, Loi visant à protéger la zone nourricière d'Eramosa Karst.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Tim Hudak: First I want to thank my colleague and neighbour, the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, Paul Miller, for co-sponsoring this bill, an issue that our constituents of Stoney Creek and the Hamilton-Niagara area care deeply about.

The bill, in short, requires the government of Ontario to take immediate action to protect from development the feeder lands of the Eramosa karst in Stoney Creek; to

direct that the feeder lands, the additional 36 hectares, be used as a conservation area; and to ensure that the feeder lands remain contiguous with the existing Eramosa karst conservation area. In closing, I want to thank the Friends of the Eramosa Karst, the Hamilton Conservation Authority, and local councillor Brad Clark, among others, for helping Mr. Miller and me bring this bill forward.

PUBLIC SAFETY RELATED TO DOGS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE LIÉE AUX CHIENS

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 60, An Act to amend the Dog Owners' Liability Act and the Animals for Research Act / Projet de loi 60, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la responsabilité des propriétaires de chiens et la Loi sur les animaux destinés à la recherche.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The bill repeals provisions in the Dog Owners' Liability Act that prohibit restricted pit bulls and provide for controls on pit bulls. The bill also repeals provisions in the Animals for Research Act relating to the disposition of pit bulls under that act.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

POLICE WEEK

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: This is Police Week in the province of Ontario, and I would invite all members of this House to join me in expressing our gratitude to the brave officers who serve us so courageously and help keep our communities safe.

Police Week is intended to highlight and strengthen the link between the police and our communities by reminding us that police and the community must work together. This year's theme, Building Partnerships for a Safer Community, celebrates that spirit of co-operation and reminds the community that safety is not the sole responsibility of the police. I want to thank the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police for working with us to develop this theme, and to thank all police services for the activities they have organized to mark Police Week in neighbourhoods across the province.

1320

This year, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police Queen's Park Day falls during Police Week. I would like to welcome several representatives of the OACP who are in the visitors' gallery this afternoon and scattered around MPP offices, ensuring that our elected members on all sides of the House get the information necessary to make those very, very important decisions. I want to thank Chief Dan Parkinson, current president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, who is from the Cornwall police service, and Chief Bob Herman, the incoming president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. He's from Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, 2010 is no ordinary year for Ontario police chiefs and the brave men and women who serve under them. In June, Canada is set to play host to world leaders from the G8 and G20 groups of nations in Huntsville and Toronto. This will be one of the largest security operations in Canadian history. Police officers from the Ontario Provincial Police and seven municipal police services are supporting their colleagues in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the lead G8 and G20 police agency, to ensure that world leaders and dignitaries conduct global business in a secure environment with no disruptions, and that the citizens who live in communities that surround the summit venues are safe in their neighbourhoods. There is an enormous spirit of co-operation in this undertaking—it's all about positive policing in the province of Ontario—and I am confident that Ontario's police officers will do us proud in the eyes of the world.

The celebration of Police Week is timed to coincide with the international Peace Officers Memorial Day and with Ontario's own tribute to fallen police officers. We mourn the loss of the brave officers who died in the line of duty. We thank and honour them for their service, and grieve with their families, friends, colleagues and communities over their passing. We must never forget their sacrifice.

Ontario's justice system works best when those of us entrusted with its care work together. I encourage all my colleagues in the Ontario Legislature to participate wherever they can in Police Week activities and to take part in the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police Queen's Park Day. Both are excellent opportunities to show appreciation to our valued partners in crime prevention and safer communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Statements by ministries? Responses?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to respond to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I want to welcome Chief Dan Parkinson of the Cornwall police service this afternoon. It's always exciting to take part in the lobby day and to listen to the different concerns and issues that you face. As a member of the opposition, along with my leader, Tim Hudak, we're very pleased to meet with you. I think we'll be talking to you about some of those issues within the hour.

As critic for community safety and correctional services, I really enjoy working in this area, particularly with the Ontario Provincial Police general headquarters in my riding; I get to talk to a lot of the deputy commissioners, sergeants etc., and of course to Com-

missioner Fantino once in a while, on a number of different issues as well. I applaud them for the work they've already done this year on the G8 and the G20; I know there has been leadership shown here. That's going to be a very difficult event to police because of the controversy that always surrounds those types of events. I think they'll do an excellent job with the partners in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as well as the Toronto Police Service.

I was saddened to attend the police memorial here a week ago yesterday, when we put the names of five officers from Ontario on the police memorial wall here at Queen's Park. I met a lot of the young families and the parents of the police officers. Any time you have to attend an event like that, you certainly feel for the families and the police services they represent. In each case, all of the chiefs of police from those police services were there with the families to support them in those difficult times.

As we move forward on some of the issues that the OACP is facing with the government, there are a lot of things we'd like to be able to help the chiefs with here today. I can tell you that we asked a question this morning in the House on access to photo ID files for police officers. We think that's something that's very reasonable. If it can make policing safer, more effective and more efficient, then it's something that we need to move forward on quickly and not drag on and on.

In the Progressive Conservative Party, we believe very strongly in equipping and training all front-line officers here in the province with tasers. We think that it will save lives. I can tell you that I've asked the question of police officers and police chiefs from right across the province, and I think one thing is for sure: They're united in the stand that they believe that's the proper move.

They're not really in favour of putting videocams on tasers for whenever an officer has to use a taser. We don't think that's something that is necessary. It's like Big Brother looking over your shoulder. However, we do believe that as we move forward in this province, there should be a comprehensive videocam program for equipping all cruisers that the police officers work from.

We're looking forward to the meeting today, and we look forward to continuing the good relationship our party has had with not only the chiefs of police but the Police Association of Ontario and the Ontario Provincial Police Association over the years. It has been a great partnership. We enjoy working with them, and we enjoy their recommendations as we make Ontario a safer place not only in our communities, but on our roads and waterways, wherever it may be.

We can safely say that this province has had remarkable co-operation between government and police throughout the decades.

Just last year, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Ontario Provincial Police.

Just recently, we had the 50th anniversary of the Ontario Provincial Police auxiliary program. Over 1,000 auxiliary officers donate their time on weekends and

throughout the week to help our front-line officers with different programs.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of our caucus. I look forward to the meeting later this afternoon.

I thank the chiefs of police of Ontario for a job well done. We're proud of the work you do and look forward to good relationships with you in the future.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'm pleased to respond to the Solicitor General and the Minister of Community Safety on behalf of New Democrats here at Queen's Park.

This is a twofer today. We've got the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police lobby day, and it's Police Week. This is the occasion when the minister and the critics in the two respective opposition parties stand up and each tries to outdo the other in terms of who's pro-police and who isn't. It's a game that's played perpetually here. The minister wants to be identified as pro-cop and says that he's with the police and he backs them 100%. Then the first opposition critic stands up and says he's more propolice than the minister is. Then the second critic stands up and says, "No, I'm more pro-police than the rest of them combined." All that stuff means nothing, because all that stuff is the yakking that goes on here when people are trying to suck up to a particular lobby group.

The issue is hard policies. The chiefs of police gave us, as they did others, a summary of the issues they wanted to raise today. I can tell you Andrea Horwath and I have already discussed some of these in anticipation of the meeting we're going to have, like other caucuses, at 4 o'clock.

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A couple we find particularly interesting, and one is the need to make some major amendments to the Police Services Act with respect to special constables. I'm particularly sensitive to that, because down where I come from, we have the Niagara Parks Police, for instance. Most of us come from, or are at least close to, university towns or cities where we inevitably have campus police. You've got any number of—and I don't even want to call them secondary police forces, because they're not secondary; they are out there doing the front-line stuff. They're patrolling in the middle of the night, they're dealing with the enforcement of laws and the protection of people, and they're engaging in many of the same risks as any other police officer. I appreciate the discussion that the OACP is generating around the need for legislative reform, amendments to the Police Services Act, to address the whole issue of special constables.

I found particularly interesting the observation by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police about the ubiquitous one-time funding. They make note of it, and they say, of course, that they're grateful for the one-time funding—the guns-and-gangs type of funding, for instance. But what that inevitably does, they point out, is it raises expectation levels, and rightly so, because they get results as a result of those concentrated efforts and the application of resources to a particular problem, but then when the one-time-only funding ends, the municipal taxpayer is on the hook for yet more and higher property

taxes that people are ill-pressed to afford, or the programs are simply terminated. They're interrupted; they're eliminated. It's one of those one-step-forward, two-stepsback lacks of achievement, because you start to make some inroads and you start to deal with a particular issue, whether it's drugs in a particular community, whether it's gangs, whether it's guns—so there's a need for consistent, stable funding.

Let me-because I would be delinquent if I let the final minute and 38 seconds go by-refer to the recent attack on at least one police officer, maybe more. We had this fellow, Rahim Jaffer, who had charges of drunk driving and cocaine possession withdrawn against him. Some sources tried to create the impression that the withdrawal of the charges was necessary because somehow the police had fouled up. We're told that one of them was a 10-year police officer, a very experienced police officer, with the Ontario Provincial Police. The commissioner of the OPP insists that his police officers followed the letter of the law, and I have no reason to disbelieve him. That unresolved and unexplained withdrawal of those serious charges—and understand what I'm saying: Implicit in the withdrawal of charges is a criticism of the police officers. They haven't had the opportunity to clear their name because they're in a quasimilitary type of operation where discipline is essential and where they don't do these things in public. So I'm very concerned about the fact that at least one police officer has been hung out to dry, if you will, because the suggestion has been that that police officer didn't abide by the letter of the law when that police officer was making an arrest and securing evidence around drunk driving and cocaine, and that's why the charges were withdrawn. I'm not sure that that was necessarily the case. The problem is that we don't know, and I'd dearly love to. The Attorney General could clear this up in a minute, but he's disinclined to.

I'm looking forward to seeing the chiefs of police later this afternoon.

PETITIONS

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

Mr. Frank Klees: I have a petition that relates to a waiting list of more than 1,000 children for speech-language pathology services in York region, signed by many concerned parents, teachers and pathologists. It reads as follows:

"Whereas there are more than 1,000 children in the public and Catholic schools in York region who are on the wait-list for speech-language therapy; and

"Whereas these are children who are struggling with speech and language disorders, which can have serious consequences without timely intervention; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of the Central Community Care Access Centre to assign speech-language pathologists to provide therapy to children on the waitlist, but the McGuinty government has substantially cut funding to the CCAC for speech-language pathology, with the result that children are not being released from the wait-list for treatment; and

"Whereas parents are being told to pay for private therapy if they want timely treatment for their children, but many parents cannot afford the cost of private therapy, with the result that these children are at risk of increased severity of their difficulties, impacting their social and academic skills;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on Premier Dalton McGuinty, the minister responsible for children and youth services," the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care "and the Minister of Education to intervene immediately to ensure that the Central CCAC develop a plan that will ensure that the more than 1,000 children in need of speech-language therapy in York region receive the necessary treatment."

I'm pleased to affix my signature because I believe that it's an urgent cause.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Reza Moridi: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we never want to see another tragedy like Walkerton ever again. The health and safety of Ontarians can never come second to profit and greed. Clean, safe drinking water is a right all Ontarians should be able to enjoy.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to upgrade our current water filtration system;

"To continue to monitor and test our water systems;

"To continue to strengthen Ontario's trust in the safety of our drinking water;

"To continue to invest in new systems and personnel to monitor and test our water;

"To never forget the mistakes of the past and always hold our water supply to the highest standard;

"To continue to invest in the health and safety of Ontarians through our water supply."

I fully agree with this petition. I sign it and pass it on to page Luke.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition here from residents of my community who are concerned with the closure of rural pharmacies. The petition reads:

"Whereas the people of Ontario depend on the accessible advice and services they currently get from their pharmacists; and

"Whereas pharmacies will not be able to continue to provide current service levels under the conditions proposed by the McGuinty government; "We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the current proposed changes to the Ontario drug benefit program not be adopted."

Thank you very much.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: This petition has to do with the Eglinton LRT, which runs between the riding of Davenport and the riding of Eglinton-Lawrence. It reads as follows:

"Whereas investing in public transit and infrastructure is important to Toronto and to Ontario to help reduce gridlock, improve air quality and create jobs;

"Whereas Toronto has the worst gridlock in the world,

as noted in a 2010 report; and

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line is a muchneeded link that will travel along Eglinton Avenue, from Kennedy station in the east to Pearson airport in the west, connecting Durham region with Peel region through the heart of Toronto;

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line would create 10,000 green jobs in construction, engineering and public transit:

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line would be a boost for neighbourhood improvement, promoting local business and increasing property values for current retailers and homeowners;

"Whereas a rapid transit line has been supported by public transit planners and experts since 1975;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the building of the Eglinton rapid transit line as soon as possible, and to say no to gridlock on Eglinton."

Since I support this petition, Mr. Speaker, I am de-

lighted to sign it and provide it to you.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care:

"Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1-billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends,

"-increase wait times and lineups for patients,

"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery,

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems; "We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I'll sign this petition and I agree with it.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas multiple sclerosis (MS) is a debilitating disease affecting a great number of people in Ontario; and

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"Whereas there has been a new treatment discovery called the liberation treatment, which addresses chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCVI) and that has been seen to provide relief for many MS sufferers,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario invest in research regarding this new treatment and make it available to victims of MS in Ontario as a listed procedure in a timely manner."

I will sign it and send it to the table with page Vrajesh.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas multiple industrial wind farm projects are being considered by the government of Ontario in the absence of independent scientific studies on the longterm effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to put a moratorium on any renewable energy approvals for the construction of industrial wind farms in the province of Ontario until such time as it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms have been fully studied and addressed."

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontarians pay more for popular generic drugs for diabetes, high blood pressure and other common health issues than patients in other jurisdictions; and

"Whereas Ontarians deserve fair prescription drug prices so that families and seniors are not charged more than those in other countries; and

"Whereas some members of the opposition have sided with large corporations to preserve the status quo rather than make prescription medications more affordable for Ontario patients by supporting the proposed drug reforms; "We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians by passing the government's legislation to lower the cost of prescription medications."

I agree with this, and I will affix my signature.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by a great number of people in my riding and the ridings surrounding Oxford. It is:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy now."

Thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition on behalf of my constituents.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the worldwide demand for water is expected to be 40% greater than the current supply in the next 20 years; and

"Whereas Ontario has developed many new clean water technologies and practices since the Walkerton water contamination, which resulted from the poor water regulation practices of the former Conservative government; and

"Whereas Ontario has now implemented many new, improved practices for clean water regulation, developed better policies and fostered new clean water technologies; and

"Whereas the Ontario government's Open Ontario plan includes strategies to increase our province's ability to develop and sell clean water expertise and products to the rest of the world;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government's plan to introduce a new Water Opportunities Act to take advantage of the province's expertise in clean water technology, create jobs and new economic opportunities for our province and help communities around the world access clean water."

As I agree with the petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

POWER PLANT

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the province of Ontario, through the Ontario Energy Board, has selected a location for a gas-fired electrical generating power station within three kilometres of 16 schools and more than 11,000 homes; and

"Whereas the Milton-Clarkson airshed is already one of the most polluted in Canada; and

"Whereas no independent environmental assessment has been completed for this proposed building location; and

"Whereas Ontario has experienced a significant reduction in demand for electrical power; and

"Whereas a recent accident at a power plant in Connecticut demonstrated the dangers that nearby residents face;

"We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to immediately rescind the existing plan to build a power plant at or near the current planned location ... on Royal Windsor Drive in Oakville and initiate a complete review of area power needs and potential building sites, including environmental assessments and a realistic assessment of required danger zone buffer areas."

I agree with this petition, and I'm pleased to sign my name and pass it to my page, Sarah.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Charles Sousa: I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas multiple sclerosis (MS) is a debilitating disease affecting a great number of people in Ontario; and

"Whereas there has been a new treatment discovery called the liberation treatment, which addresses chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCVI) and that has been seen to provide relief for many MS sufferers,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario invest in research regarding this new treatment and make it available to victims of MS in Ontario as a listed procedure in a timely manner."

I'll affix my signature and provide it to Jacob.

ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Frank Klees: This petition to the Parliament of Ontario is in support of an online organ donor registry.

"Whereas one person in Canada dies every three days waiting for an organ transplant and over 1,600 Ontarians are on a waiting list for organ and tissue donations;

"Whereas organ donor registrations in some jurisdictions are as high as 80%, but Ontario lags far behind at 17%;

"Whereas Ontario's antiquated organ donor registration process still requires forms to be mailed in or personal attendance at ServiceOntario health card offices;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on the Minister of Health to

immediately implement a resolution ... that calls for the creation of an online organ donor registration link on the ServiceOntario website that would enable people to register as organ donors using their OHIP number."

I'm pleased to support this petition.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition from Nancy Wallace and the folks in the Dufferin-Eglinton area.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas investing in public transit and infrastructure is important to Toronto ...

"Whereas Toronto has the worst gridlock in the world

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line is a muchneeded link that will travel along Eglinton Avenue, from Kennedy station ... to Pearson airport ...

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line would create ... jobs ...

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line would be a boost for neighbourhood improvement, promoting local

"Whereas a rapid transit line has been supported by public transit planners and experts since 1975;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the building of the Eglinton rapid transit line as soon as possible, and to say no to gridlock" and ask Mayor Miller to stop the stalling.

I support this petition.

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: "Whereas the hard-working residents in Simcoe-Grey do not want the new harmonized sales tax (HST) that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food under \$4, electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snow-plowing, air-conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, vet bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

"Whereas the blended sales tax will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes ... for Ontario consumers."

I will sign the petition, and I happen to agree with it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 6, 2010, on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit / Projet de loi 44, Loi mettant en oeuvre le crédit pour les coûts d'énergie dans le Nord de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Once again, we have the opportunity to speak to a closure motion—a time allocation motion—this one regarding Bill 44, a credit for northern Ontario residents.

I think we all have to take a look back and look at how things are progressing. This Liberal government is usually known for all its fanfare when it introduces a bill: you know, photo ops, brochures and all the fluff.

Now we have a bill that they've brought in a time allocation motion for, and this, of course, will allow for a credit for residents in northern Ontario to try to deal with the abusive hydro costs and energy costs that they're subjected to by this Liberal government. Abusive: The cost of energy in Ontario is bankrupting Ontario.

Let's just put things on the record for everybody to understand and to reflect upon, especially with the north. So here is this up-to-\$200 credit, and of course, if you have a combined family income of over \$45,000 or a greater income than \$35,000, then you start having this credit clawed back. Let's put on the record what the accomplishments of this Liberal government are in the north. For this \$200, the people in the north have lost 45,000 jobs in the forestry sector alone; 45,000 jobs lost, and they're getting a crumb. The people in Timmins: Xstrata is closing up and thousands of jobs are moving out, and they're moving over to Quebec, where there are low-cost, competitive energy rates, not the exorbitant fees that this government has implemented.

In addition to the 45,000 jobs and the thousands of jobs lost at Xstrata, let's not forget the over 60 mills in forestry that are closed up and gone as a result of this Liberal government's energy policies. That's what is a record that is so, so important for this government and that's what this closure bill is all about. Instead of the fanfare that generally accompanies their bills, they are trying to hide from their record. That's what they're doing with this time closure; it's hiding from their record of job losses and poverty that they have created in the north

Let's just take a look at what is the cause of this abusive energy cost in the north. We can start looking at the Green Energy Act and the feed-in tariff program and how this Liberal government, how the Premier and his past deputy have enriched their friends in green energy at the expense and the cost of northern Ontario. We can look at the Samsung deal—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I would ask the member to withdraw that last comment.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'll withdraw.

The Samsung deal: They're making money, Korea is making money, but the people in the north are getting sold down the river.

As this government foams at the mouth over windmills and solar panels and pays up to 80 cents a kilowatt hour for that power, what are we missing here? In the north we have over 5,000 megawatts of the cleanest, cheapest, greenest energy ever known to mankind. It's called hydroelectric power. We have over 5,000 megawatts available, and it's left unused. It's left going down the drain as this Liberal government runs to Korea, runs to their friends to sign exorbitant deals—up to 80-cents-a-kilowatt-hour power—and then gets to shoulder that cost onto our industry and our residents. We have huge unemployment as a result.

The solution, of course, from the Liberals is: Let's give them a few crumbs. Let's make a big promotion here of a \$130-a-year tax credit for an individual or \$200 for a family. But we're going to claw it back if you make even medium wage. Can you imagine a family of \$45,000, two incomes, and once they hit over \$45,000 they're going to start having it clawed back? This is crumbs. It's criminal what this Liberal government is doing, and I understand why they want to hide behind the time allocation motion: because they can't stand the scrutiny of their real actions.

I'd like to see any Liberal member, but especially a member from the north—why have you not utilized those 5,000 megawatts of hydroelectric power, instead of running toward these solar panels and windmills, going offshore when we could be creating jobs and creating a competitive environment for northern Ontario?

I understand this Liberal government. We all understand this Liberal government. When there is a problem in front of them that they've created, what is it they do? They don't look for a solution. They could fix the problem, like generating hydroelectric power, but instead it's so much easier for this Liberal government just to write another cheque. They never want to fix a problem; they're well apt at creating them. The only thing they ever do is look at how to mitigate the effects of their ridiculous, harmful policies.

In this case, what is their solution? "Well, we'll mitigate the effects of the HST. We'll mitigate the effects of the higher energy costs by having these crumbs of credits available to people in the north, \$130." On the HST alone, we see that the cost is going to be over \$800 just on that one new levy this Liberal government has placed on northerners. The solution: "We'll give you \$130."

They're shanghaiing northern Ontario with these ridiculous and abusive policies, and now they have the gall to bring in a time allocation motion so that they don't have to be held to account for their actions, so that they can't be held under scrutiny for what they're doing. They just continually put more and more people out of work in the north, put more and more forestry companies out of work, close more and more mines, and then, "Well, let's

just not talk about that anymore and have a time allocation motion."

This is an abuse. It is incredible that any member of this Liberal government would have—and they probably are ashamed of going to the north with these sorts of policies. They are hiding all the gallimaufry of their real actions, which is to do nothing but write another cheque, and, "We're going to go into the taxpayers' pockets one more time, take some more money out of their pockets, and then give them some crumbs in return."

I think everybody in Ontario sees through the facade of this Liberal government. Everybody understands that this is a government that is withered on the vine. There is no substance, there is nothing to this Liberal government, other than to take more money out of people's pockets and then offer them some rhetorical policy that they'll hide from. They'll put another puppy in the window to try to distract people, and then they'll just take more money and hide behind their favoured ploy of "Let's have time allocation once again."

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Phillips has moved government notice of motion number 22. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This will be a 10-minute bell. Call in the members.

The division bells rang from 1359 to 1409.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): All those in favour will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia Albanese, Laura Arthurs, Wayne Bentley, Christopher Broten, Laurel C. Brown, Michael A. Brownell, Jim Caplan, David Chan, Michael Chiarrelli, Bob Colle, Mike Delaney, Bob Dhillon, Vic Dickson, Joe Dombrowsky, Leona Duncan, Dwight Fonseca, Peter Gravelle, Michael Jaczek, Helena Jeffrey, Linda Johnson, Rick Kular, Kuldip Lalonde, Jean-Marc Leal, Jeff Levac, Dave Mangat, Amrit Mauro, Bill McMeekin, Ted McNeely, Phil Meilleur, Madeleine Moridi, Reza Murray, Glen R. Naqvi, Yasir Orazietti, David Phillips, Gerry Qaadri, Shafiq Ramsal, Khalil Ramsay, David Ruprecht, Tony Sandals, Liz Smith, Monique Sorbara, Greg Sousa, Charles Van Bommel, Maria Wilkinson, John

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): All those opposed will stand and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted Chudleigh, Ted Dunlop, Garfield Hampton, Howard Hardeman, Ernie Jones, Sylvia Klees, Frank Kormos, Peter Marchese, Rosario Martiniuk, Gerry Miller, Norm Miller, Paul

Prue, Michael Sterling, Norman W. Tabuns, Peter Wilson, Jim The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 45; the nays are 16.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Orders of the day.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent that notwithstanding standing order 47(d), the order for second reading of Bill 44 may now be called.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Agreed? Agreed.

LOWERING ENERGY COSTS FOR NORTHERN ONTARIANS ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES COÛTS D'ÉNERGIE

POUR LES ONTARIENS DU NORD

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 5, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit / Projet de loi 44, Loi mettant en oeuvre le crédit pour les coûts d'énergie dans le Nord de l'Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 10, 2010, I am now

required to put the question.

On May 3, 2010, Mr. Phillips moved second reading of Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

I declare the ayes have it—

Interjection: Same vote?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Same vote?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Five-minute bell: Call in all the members.

The division bells rang from 1413 to 1418.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Members in favour will rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia Albanese, Laura Arnott, Ted Arthurs, Wayne Bentley, Christopher Broten, Laurel C. Brown, Michael A. Brownell, Jim Caplan, David Chan, Michael Chiarelli, Bob Chudleigh, Ted Colle, Mike Delaney, Bob Gravelle, Michael Hampton, Howard Hardeman, Ernie Jaczek, Helena Jeffrey, Linda Johnson, Rick Jones, Sylvia Klees, Frank Kormos, Peter Kular, Kuldip Lalonde, Jean-Marc Leal, Jeff Levac, Dave Mangat, Amrit Miller, Norm Miller, Paul Moridi, Reza Murray, Glen R. Naqvi, Yasir Orazietti, David Phillips, Gerry Prue, Michael Qaadri, Shafiq Ramal, Khalil Ramsay, David Ruprecht, Tony Sandals, Liz Smith, Monique Dhillon, Vic Dickson, Joe Dombrowsky, Leona Duncan, Dwight Dunlop, Garfield Fonseca. Peter Marchese, Rosario Martiniuk, Gerry Mauro, Bill McMeekin, Ted McNeely, Phil Meilleur, Madeleine Sorbara, Greg Sousa, Charles Sterling, Norman W. Van Bommel, Maria Wilkinson, John Wilson, Jim

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 60; the nays are 0.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 10, 2010, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'ENSEIGNEMENT POSTSECONDAIRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 6, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 favorisant le choix et l'excellence au niveau post-secondaire, la Loi de 2005 sur les collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel et la Loi de 2002 sur l'École d'art et de design de l'Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Jim Wilson: I am pleased to join the debate this afternoon on Bill 43, which makes amendments to both the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act and the Private Career Colleges Act. This bill also changes the Ontario College of Art & Design Act to reflect its new name as the Ontario College of Art and Design University, and consequential amendments to allow them to operate as such.

I could go on about the government's dismal record on post-secondary education and remind our viewers and the members in the House that in spite of promises in the 2003 election and the 2007 election, when Dalton McGuinty made one promise to say that he—our post-secondary institutions, our colleges and universities, were dead last in funding: 10 out of 10 of all the provinces in Canada. He promised, in those two election campaigns, that he would bring funding up to at least the national average. That promise turned out to be as adhered to or as fulfilled as all of his other tax promises. He said he wouldn't increase our taxes during both those elections, and what did he do? We have now the two largest single increases in the history of Ontario: the Ontario health tax, which each of us pay—it's really a surtax, not a health

tax—and we have the HST coming in, which caught us all a bit by surprise.

But I will talk to the bill, and I intend to be critical of the government's management of the private career college sector. But off the bat, I do want to say that I am supportive of the name change of OCAD, the Ontario College of Art and Design, and the changes in the bill that allow OCAD to grant degrees as a university. As I said when Minister Milloy introduced the bill a couple of weeks ago, it's too bad that OCAD is being put in this contentious act cracking down on bad people in the sector, because the OCAD part is good news. I know that my caucus colleagues who have spoken to this legislation to date have each said that they support OCAD becoming a university, adding the term "university" to its title, and the changes that amend the powers of its board of governors.

I served on the University of Toronto board of governors as a student rep many, many years ago. I just want to commend all those volunteers who are working with the Ontario College of Art and Design, which will be called, if passed, OCAD University. So, congratulations to them. I'm sure there's agreement on that part of the bill, as I said.

Where this bill gets contentious is when you begin talking about cracking down on private career colleges and private universities. I don't think you will find a member in this House who doesn't agree that deceitful and unprofessional institutions should be shut down right away. It seems that every year, from time to time there are horrific stories reported in the media about students being ripped off, unable to either get the degree or certificate that they paid their tuition for because the institution goes bankrupt through bad business practices or fraudulent practices, the students out of pocket, out of money, out of time, or they do get a certificate or what they think is a degree, only to find that the college they have been attending for one, two, three or four years is bogus and the degree or certificate is not recognized by the government, or any government, and is not recognized by employers. That has happened from time to time, so there is a need to have authority to crack down on the bad apples. But I do want to stress that I will be suggesting to my caucus colleagues that we vote against this legislation on second reading because of the absolute lack of consultation with the private career college and private university sector. It's astounding.

The first problem with the bill, as I said, is a lack of consultation. The second problem is that the bill gives the government more power to do what they have already failed to do in cracking down on the bad apples in the sector. Let's talk about lack of consultation.

In fact, there weren't any consultations whatsoever with the sector on this legislation. That's what the staff at the ministry confirmed when I asked them during my briefing on this bill. To their credit, they were quite honest about that and said that, no, they hadn't consulted nor, to their knowledge, had the minister or his staff consulted with the sector.

I'll read a letter from the sector. They're quite angry that the government did not consult with them; they certainly don't appreciate it. Here's a letter addressed to the Premier from Bryan Merkley, president of the Association of Private Colleges. I promised I'd read it into the record. It's dated May 7, 2010.

"Dear Premier:

"As one of Ontario's private career college owners since 1990, I want to register my opposition to Bill 43.

"This bill and its amendments to the PCC Act, 2005"—that's the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005—"needs to be stopped immediately.

"I'm concerned the act has already affected my ability to operate my campus in Cornwall, and these amendments will further reduce my ability to serve Cornwall's employment market.

"Proper input from schools is required before appropriate amendments can be made to the PCC Act, 2005.

"Yours in education and training,

"Bryan Merkley

"President, Association of Private Colleges."

Here is another letter sent to the minister about the same time.

"Minister Milloy,

"I'm writing on behalf of the Association of Private Colleges (AOPC) in opposition of Bill 43. Specifically we're concerned about the changes to the PCCA, 2005 and would respectfully request that these changes be removed prior to approval of the bill so that a proper period of consultation can be pursued."

Obviously if you did that you would gut the bill, so you'd have to remove the bill.

"AOPC was notified by your office on the night before these changes were introduced. They were described to me as minor technical changes. I was offered a briefing and then told it was probably not necessary because these changes were 'minor'.

"AOPC hosted a private career college reception"—by coincidence, I might add—"on Wednesday, April 28"—two days after the bill was introduced—"and it was only during that reception that we actually saw the wording of Bill 43 for the first time."

I'm going to interrupt the letter again: I in fact brought them 20 copies of the bill, because just an hour earlier I had received a briefing by the bureaucrats, which I requested; it was very nice of them to do that. But the sector knew virtually nothing about the thing.

The letter goes on to say: "Needless to say, we were shocked to see the scope of the changes being made and quickly realized the potential harm this would cause the private career college sector.

"We are open to change the PCC Act, 2005—let's just ensure they are the 'right' changes.

"I look forward to the possibility of further discussions.

"Thank you in advance for your consideration,

"Michael Nurse

"Executive director

"Association of Private Colleges."

We already know that the government said in 2006 that they were going to review this particular legislation. So I just ask, what the heck has the government been doing for the last four years? You'd think they'd be out talking to the career colleges and private universities and asking them how they can work together to ensure the best results for students. After all, that's what it's all about. Sadly, the government decided instead, as they normally do or seem to have a habit of doing—at least this Liberal government—to have people who work in big offices in the Mowat Block across the street here in Toronto come up with their own solution, sitting around a big boardroom table without even going out to talk to the people who deliver these educational and training services.

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It goes back to the "Dalton knows best" attitude of this government, like we see as the government imposes windmills on people who don't even want them. It's a very arrogant attitude we see from this government. It's the Liberals saying that if you're not part of the political elite and don't work west of Bay Street, south of Wellesley Street, east of University Avenue or north of College Street here in Toronto, then you haven't got a clue what the heck you're talking about. Then they go ahead and impose rules on you as they see fit from their big offices across the street.

Blame for that lies squarely at the feet of the minister, Minister Milloy. It's his fault nobody consulted with the sector. I don't know what he does all day. He has only introduced a few bills since becoming minister, all of them relatively minor, so I don't know why he wouldn't take the time to make sure that he got them right and to meet with the people he's proposing to regulate. If he had, he would have heard stories like this. I'm going to enter into the record a letter that was sent to the government after this bill was introduced, dated May 4, 2010:

"Re: Bill 43

"To Whom it May Concern:

"As a private career college (PCC) owner-operator for 20 years, I am writing this letter to express my concern over Bill 43, which is currently being debated in the House. My concern centres on the power this bill will give to one individual, that being the superintendent of training, colleges and universities (TCU) should Bill 43 be passed.

"Part of my concerns stem from the lack of knowledge that those sitting at Queen's Park have in regard to the private career college industry in Ontario. There is a problem with illegal private trainers masquerading as ... private career colleges in this province. I have worked very hard and invested a lot of time and money to come into compliance as a registered college offering approved programs and am supportive of any efforts at shutting those down that are operating outside the PCC act 2005. However, my concerns lie with the fact that if this same bill becomes law, it provides one individual with such discretionary power which could then be used against

those that operate good schools, without ever having had a complaint lodged against them with TCU, such as mine.

"One example of lack of understanding by those involved is the continued use of the phrase 'illegal private career colleges' ... when referring to an illegal entity operating outside the PCC act 2005, having neither registered nor had their programs approved through TCU."

The letter goes on to say, "If they are not a registered PCC"—private career college—"then the term should not be used to describe them, even if the word 'illegal' is used.

"After 20 years in business I am now being accused of not operating in a financially responsible way and must provide audited statements, my programs may be deemed inappropriate and suspended under the reaches of these new powers, and prospective students are told to 'protect themselves." That's apparently on the ministry's website. "Program consultants have become inspectors and investigators, and I already live in fear of retaliation if I challenge the government on decisions that affect what I have chosen to do for the past 20 years, as is evidenced by the recent Licence Appeal Tribunal hearing against the Niagara on the Lake Culinary School Inc. that clearly points to an abuse of existing powers that could have dire results in my business should it happen to me.

"This Bill 43 needs to be openly debated. Those that are going to have their livelihoods affected by these changes need to have an opportunity to educate those who will be voting on this bill. Not only does Bill 43 need to be considered strongly, but the PCC act 2005 in its entirety also. If not, choice for post-secondary education could be greatly affected for the people of Ontario if this bill becomes law and its power applied to good, moral, hard-working and predominantly compliant colleges. Given the rapid change of policy and definition as it pertains to the PCC act 2005, full compliance is elusive at best.

"Yours in education and training,

"Michael Teglas,

"Owner/director, Academy of Learning (Kingston, Ontario)."

Those are some of the complaints we've heard about the lack of consultations on this particular piece of legislation.

I want to go back for a moment to what I said earlier about the government's failure to act on the powers they've had since 2005, when they announced and introduced the legislation to crack down on unscrupulous private career colleges. A lot of this bill essentially extends the very same powers to investigate and shut down career colleges to private universities. So whether you're a private university or a private college, with this bill, Bill 43, the Liberals are going to subject them both, more or less, to the same rules, which is fine. There should be a level playing field understood by all, but when you look at how this government bungled the first five years of the Private Career Colleges Act, then you'll see why we

might be sceptical on this side of the House of their ability to manage an extension of the new powers in this bill.

Back in 2005, when the government slid the Private Career Colleges Act into the back of a budget bill of that year, they said that the legislation would solve the problems with fly-by-night private institutions. I heard that the other day when I listened to the Liberal member for London–Fanshawe, Mr. Ramal. He said in his remarks, "It's very important to put some kind of deterrent, some kind of punishment on the people who are going to break the law. It's important to all of us to create that safety mechanism, because the people deserve respect, and when they come to this province, they believe they're coming to credible institutions. Therefore, we have to create that credibility for them and allow them to come and study and pursue their education in a professional manner."

Here's what the Liberal member for Ajax, Mr. Arthurs, said in his remarks in 2005 in support of the Private Career Colleges Act: "The 2005 budget recognizes that many Ontarians are choosing to pursue training opportunities at private career colleges. To ensure the quality of vocational programs offered at these colleges and protect student interest, the budget proposes to introduce the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005. This legislation would, among other measures, establish a superintendent to oversee such colleges, implement an insurance fund to protect students in the event of a college's bankruptcy, and ensure that only registered, approved colleges can operate in the province of Ontario."

It's as if the Liberal members have just pulled out their notes from 2005 and started to reread them here five years later. The remarks in this House on this piece of legislation now are really just an admission of the failure to enforce the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005. They were going to protect students then, they were going to improve quality back in 2005, and we all know what a miserable failure that has turned out to be.

I think the Ombudsman did the most work to point this out. He was piercing in his view that the government was failing to protect students, despite the Liberals' muchheralded Private Career Colleges Act, 2005. Here's what the Ombudsman said at a press conference here at Queen's Park on July 14, 2009, about four years after the Private Career Colleges Act was put in place by the Liberals: "When I released my annual report a few weeks ago," the Ombudsman says, "I spoke about how the current economic situation has intensified the need for strong and effective oversight of government, to protect public dollars and trust. The report I'm releasing today tells the shocking story of what happens when the government fails to protect vulnerable members of the public.

"Bestech Academy was a small private career college with a relatively small number of students—but the implications of the government's failure to look out for those students are as big as Ontario itself. Thousands of students attend these colleges, and as more and more people are thrown out of work or forced to seek retraining in new fields, their enrolment will only grow. We simply cannot allow what happened to the Bestech students to happen again.

"The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has a duty to regulate private career colleges. In fact, when the Private Career Colleges Act was proclaimed in 2006, the then-minister declared it would 'ensure that all students enrolled in private career colleges get the education and training they were promised.' But our investigation," the Ombudsman goes on to say, "found that for the students of Bestech, that promise was broken many times over.

"We found that the ministry's handling of Bestech Academy was abjectly inept. The very ministry that was supposed to be policing Bestech's deceitful president was actually paying for students to attend her college, giving her endless chances to comply with rules that she openly flouted, and, days after she shut the place down and left students stranded, the ministry actually hired her as an employee!

"My concern is not just with this one school and the ministry's complete lack of enforcement against its brazen director, who saw herself as 'too cool for school,' or above the law. I'm concerned about its systemic failure to enforce the rules governing private colleges—to the point that Bestech's president told us that she essentially ignored them because so many others were doing the same thing.

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"The fact is, the ministry has never laid a charge or prosecuted an illegal college. Its officials told us they didn't want to play 'gotcha' games—they wanted to encourage more colleges to obey the law and become registered. But because of their timidity and squeamishness to get tough with unregistered colleges, Bestech's students had no protection—because the assurance fund set up under the act only applies to registered colleges.

"This is not a case of strained government resources," the Ombudsman goes on to say. "The ministry was well aware that Bestech was operating illegally for two years, right under its nose.

"The good news is that the ministry has accepted 10 of my 11 recommendations, which will benefit the tens of thousands of students who will entrust their money and their future careers to private colleges this year and in the years to come. I've recommended a 'buyer beware' list be put up on the ministry's website, with much clearer lists of problem colleges, so students will have a fighting chance against rogue operators."

The Ombudsman goes on to say, "But I'm very disappointed that my recommendation that it find a way to compensate the Bestech students was rejected, because the ministry refused to think outside the box and do the right thing. This is very unfortunate for this small group of people who had the courage to come forward with their stories. They didn't get the education they were promised, or the protection of their government. But for the lack of due diligence by ministry officials, many of

these students would not have been ripped off by Bestech.

"The cost of helping them would have been miniscule, but it will take the ministry a long time to repay the cost it has incurred to the public trust in this case. We will keep a close eye on the ministry as it implements my recommendations and reports back to us over the next year."

In fairness, the Ombudsman didn't just look at private career colleges; he was critical of public colleges, too. A month later, in August 2009, he had some very tough words for Cambrian College. Let me read from his prepared remarks. He said in his remarks, "The report I'm releasing today could not be more timely, because it's a back-to-school horror story. This is a stressful time of year for a lot of people—even if they are no longer students or parents with kids going back to class. For many people, this anxiety triggers a common nightmare: You're back in school, and you have to take an exam that you're completely unprepared for.

"That's what happened to the students in the case I'm reporting on today. But for them, the nightmare happened

in real life.

"The students in the health information management program at Cambrian College in Sudbury believed they were training for high-demand, well-paying jobs in the health sector, particularly in hospitals, working with complex file coding systems. They had dreams of working anywhere in Canada, in top medical facilities.

"They studied for two long years towards their goal. Many spent tens of thousands of dollars on tuition, books and living expenses, only to find out that they were not only completely unprepared for the exam that would get them into the profession—they were not even eligible to

take it.

"That's because the health information management program at Cambrian College was never recognized by the Canadian Health Information Management Association, or CHIMA—the national body that controls entry into the profession. Cambrian College knew this, but didn't tell its students. Instead, it repeatedly told them they were 'working on' getting CHIMA recognition, and 'not to worry.' This, despite the fact that they had not even applied for CHIMA recognition until 18 months after the course started—and when they did, the program didn't even come close to CHIMA's standards."

The Ombudsman goes on to say, "When the unfortunate graduates learned they weren't eligible to write the CHIMA exam, Cambrian offered to help them—by sending them back to school again. If they spent another year studying and another \$1,700 on tuition, they could take a course that would get them ready for the exam, and they would be reimbursed by the college if they

"But for some of those same students, that was just another nightmare—they signed up for the course, only to find out it was far too difficult. Their two years at Cambrian hadn't even prepared them for the course that was supposed to prepare them to write the exam!

"I launched my investigation in this case after more than half of the graduates from the first two years of this program complained. My findings were clear—Cambrian College treated them unfairly, and it was callous about their plight. It was arrogant and dismissive toward my investigation as well—an attitude that I've summed up in my report title as 'too cool for school.'

"You may recall that title from my last report, and that is no coincidence. Last month, I reported on how the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities was failing to protect students of illegal, unscrupulous career colleges that also exhibit this kind of attitude. I called on the ministry to use its powers to crack down on these facilities so Ontario students can have confidence that

they will get the education they pay for.

"Although today's report—Too Cool for School Too—sounds like a sequel, it is even more serious than the first, because this case involved colleges that are publicly funded, as opposed to private career colleges. Cambrian College alone receives in the neighbourhood of \$50 million every year. It's not just the students who trust that those funds are being spent on quality education that will prepare them for gainful employment—it's all taxpayers. We all have a stake in this.

"Sadly, the ministry doesn't see it that way. It hands out money to colleges, but abdicates any responsibility for ensuring that they deliver the programs they promise. It says this is out of respect for the independence of colleges. But it doesn't serve the colleges, or their communities, to enable programs that waste people's precious time and money and don't qualify them for the jobs

they seek.

"The ministry assured me it is concerned about accountability, but I found its response weak and disappointing. I am very concerned that if it does not implement stricter monitoring of the college programs it funds, we will see more cases like this.

"We will see more students like the young people we interviewed—several of them trying to make a better life for themselves and their young children—who gave up two years of their lives and wound up doing dead-end work instead of the job of their dreams.

"Those students should be able to turn to their government when its publicly funded institutions let them down. The ministry was not there for them in this case, and I hope it has learned a valuable lesson."

That concludes the excerpt from the Ombudsman's two reports.

Those are two recent examples of the government's failure to protect students, despite their authority to act on these issues. Those are two examples where the government has extensive authority now, but has failed to use it since it last gave itself that authority some five years ago. I'm not convinced that using the heavy hand of government is the best way to get the best results. We've certainly seen that approach fail in the past five years, and I'm not sure why I or my colleagues should endorse a continuation of that same old plan.

My colleague from Lanark-Carleton, Mr. Sterling, raised a great example of how they control the quality of

education in the United States. I'll remind members of what Mr. Sterling said last Wednesday. He said that how the Americans "control the quality of education in private colleges is by limiting the ability of students going to that private institution in terms of their ability to get money from the government for student loans. If they're not producing"—that's the colleges—"graduates who can go out and earn enough money to pay their student loans, that private institution is shut off. It doesn't matter whether it's private or public. So it drives not only a better student repayment rate, but it also puts aside anybody who doesn't have a good program.

"Under our system, there is no penalty. If you encourage a young person into your institution, public or private, and you say, 'Borrow \$30,000,' if you don't give a good program you still get another student in the next year and you can do the same trick.

"So why not do it that way, rather than do it through this bill?"

The member for Lanark-Carleton raises a great point: Is Bill 43 truly the way we should be approaching the problems in the sector? Or should we be looking at alternatives that seem to work in other jurisdictions?

In closing, I'll just say that I'm disappointed that the government did not consult on this bill. In light of that, I am looking forward to committee hearings. I hope we have more than just a couple hours of committee hearings. We need a few days. We should actually visit some of these career colleges and talk to the students, but this government doesn't like to do that, so I'm not going to hold my breath.

I'm going to recommend to my colleagues that we vote against this in second reading because of the lack of consultation, and because it's just propagating the same old system that doesn't seem to be working, that was going to be the cure-all back in 2005—and the law was proclaimed in 2006.

Yes, I'll admit that when you go through the bill clause-by-clause it does give more teeth to the superintendent. But given the ineptness of the ministry, why would you want to give that person more teeth to keep doing the same lousy job they've been doing for years? Nothing personal, I'm sure, but the system isn't working.

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This bill is supposed to be minor. That's what the career colleges and their association were told. It's far from minor. It quadruples the fines, in many cases. It introduces new fines. It's very, very heavy-handed. I'll just remind the people at home that there are 425 career colleges with 500 campuses in Ontario and more than 27,684 students pursuing degrees in 3,425 approved programs in more than 70 communities. There are 17 privately funded universities in Ontario. Some examples would be Emmanuel Bible College and the Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies. There are 29 institutions that offer degree programs by ministerial consent, also captured under this bill. Some of these private institutions would be the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College;

Cornell University has a program here in Ontario; Niagara University and Trinity Western University. Also captured under this bill are public institutions that are permitted to grant degrees instead of diplomas. These are colleges like Sheridan, Seneca, Niagara, Loyalist, Georgian in my own riding, and many other Ontario colleges.

It's a large sector. The whole post-secondary sector is under tremendous pressure. The \$350 million that the government put in its budget just two months ago are not going to be adequate. The government has not planned: their Reaching Higher plan at \$6.2 billion that they introduced in 2004 sounded great, and it silenced the sector. I've only been the critic about two years, but for many years we didn't hear anything from the sector. The presidents and the bigwigs who make these half-milliondollar salaries in these institutions were basically bought off by the government: no complaints, until they started to figure out—and it was before the recession, but it was worsened by the recession—that the \$6.2 billion was a masterful marketing ploy. The government smartly figured out in 2004: "This is our five-year projection for enrolment growth." So rather than announce year by year the funding for the post-secondary sector, as other governments did in the past, it packaged it all together in a five-year plan called Reaching Higher. It did not keep up with enrolment. You're actually spending less per student than you would have under an Ernie Eves or Mike Harris government. That comes from the Canadian Federation of Students, who, I'm sure, do not vote Conservative, but they have been very good to come in and point these things out.

The fact of the matter is that it was a masterful plan. The sector was looking for a renewal, what they called Reaching Higher 2, another package of some sort in the last budget. All they got was \$350 million, which I'm sure the sector is grateful for. The colleges and universities of Ontario tell me they're eager to spend that money and to build capacity in the system, but they are not quite sure how they're going to do that and also make room for 20,000 new foreign students. There is a real danger that Ontario residents and Canadian students will get pumped out of the system or not be able to get into the system because of 20,000 new foreign students coming in, the only rationale being not that it's better for the system but it provides cash: "In lieu of the government giving the post-secondary sector money, we'll raise the foreign tuitions-which are already four times the average tuition that an Ontario resident pays-through the roof. That will generate a lot of money for the sector and hence get the government off the hook."

You've got a quadruple cohort. You've got the regular graduates this year who in September will be looking for places—our regular high school graduates; you've got massive unemployment, over 350,000 manufacturing jobs lost, and many, many of those people, on their own dime, trying to get into college, university or retraining programs; you've got about 22,000—or 23,000, I guess, now—being paid for through the Second Career program, who are also trying to get in, competing for those

same spots; and now you have these foreign students coming in. So \$350 million won't do it.

I often say in my remarks to the sector when I'm out speaking: "Yes, Mr. McGuinty, the Premier, said he was going to be the education Premier, but he didn't say he was going to be the post-secondary education Premier."

Other than a masterful packaging of the money under Reaching Higher, we're still dead last in Canada in terms of funding. Ontario has the highest tuition fees in Canada. I think we have the second-lowest per capita funding of any jurisdiction outside the state of Alabama for post-secondary education students. The record is miserable, it continues to be miserable, and the recent budget didn't do anything for it. All you can think to do now is to bring in a bill that gives more powers to a ministry that has been doing a lousy job of cracking down on the unscrupulous and illegal characters in the private career college sector.

With that, I look forward to comments from colleagues, but we won't be supporting this legislation on second reading, and we'll see what happens in committee.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I appreciate the opportunity to take a couple of moments to comment on the official opposition leadoff, at this point in time, by the member from Simcoe-Grey.

Let me start by saying that I'm pleased that there is an element, if not elements, of the bill that he supports, particularly in respect to the Ontario College of Art and Design and its recognition for the work it has been doing for a number of years, obviously, and university status recognition, which would certainly go a long way for the graduates coming out of that facility. I had a chance to read last week—I don't have it in front of me, but I was particularly interested in the long history of that particular facility and the reference to changes in name and structure and strategy. But this is a significant change within the legislation itself.

The member spent the latter part of his time speaking to post-secondary planning. I can tell you that, in my view, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and the sector have been and continue to be pleased with the investment that the McGuinty government has been making in post-secondary education, whether that's the \$6.2 billion that was part of the Reaching Higher plan or, more currently, the \$310 million set aside in this budget, on an annualized basis, for student growth within the system.

It certainly supports the Open Ontario plan. It continues to support the need to understand the importance of having a highly trained, skilled and educated population as we continue to change focus on what the world is going to look like from a business standpoint, on a goforward basis. We have to plan for that, and the way to do that is to invest effectively within the system.

One only needs to talk to the college and university presidents and their senior staff in a casual way to see how excited they are about the investments we continue to make and the direction that we're providing. This legislation builds on that in a variety of sectors, including the private and career colleges.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: The member for Simcoe South—

Mr. Jim Wilson: Grey.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Simcoe-Grey. As he called me the member for Lanark-Carleton, I thought I'd get him back, as I'm the member for Carleton-Mississippi Mills.

He talked a little bit about what the public accounts committee did about two years ago, and that was that we looked into the repayment rate for students who had loan money to go to post-secondary-school institutions. What we found is that the default rate had gone from about 13% up to 17% and was going—and probably is still going—in the wrong direction.

So we looked at other jurisdictions. What some of the jurisdictions in the United States do is they say to the institution, whether it's private or public, "If your rate goes above 5%"-I think it was 5% in some jurisdictions; it was slightly different in other jurisdictions— "then we will not allow students going to your particular institution in that particular program to access student funds." So it puts a financial limit around what an institution can do in terms of attracting people into programs that are either not very good or programs that are producing too many of a particular profession or whatever. It's much more honest with the students than our present programs here in Ontario. In Ontario, we encourage students to go into programs where there are no employment opportunities in the end. So I think it's a very unique, innovative way to actually do a better job in education and a better job for young people in the workforce after education.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise to comment on the statements made by the member from Simcoe-Grey. I have to state that I am somewhat puzzled by the statements that he had to make. I go back to my own career which was, long before I became a politician, when I worked in the immigration department. I would see people come from around the world expecting to get a decent education in Ontario, and particularly those who attended secondary and post-secondary education in unlicensed colleges. I remember seeing the looks on their faces as they were literally ripped off by very many unscrupulous schools that promised a lot of things and promised degrees and promised higher education, oftentimes to deliver nothing. I remember talking to many of those students who scrambled to try to go from those schools to some of the regular schools that were provided here in Ontario, and the difficulty that they had.

I also saw other people who used those same unscrupulous schools as a way of coming into Canada

because, you see, they couldn't get accepted into some of the government-run schools in Ontario and so they would apply to these little career colleges or places. I remember one of them was the General Welding School on Jarvis Street, particularly notorious because nobody had ever made it through a whole week in the education program. They would pay the money upfront; they would get a visa; they would come to Canada; they would go to the school for one day; they would see the futility of it, or they didn't really plan to go in the first place, and no diplomas were ever issued. So I think it's time that Ontario does something, does anything to try to rein in these career colleges, to protect those people who are legitimate students and to stop it being some kind of avenue to simply gain access to Canada. I think it's very late but I'm going to vote for this bill in the vain hope that something can be done.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Dave Levac: The member from Simcoe-Grey offers us some snapshots of what he believes is the problem with the legislation and does understand that it is going to committee and we are going to do some hearings. So I think he would acknowledge that; I think he did acknowledge in his speech that he had hoped that that would happen, and I can assure him that that's going to happen. He does accept the college of art designation, the new reality of it being a university. He understands that and is supportive of that. We're grateful for that.

The comments that he made about the rest of the career college issue are somewhat difficult because, like the member from Beaches-East York, the concept here is to try to close a door that's been used far too often to hurt an awful lot of students who were taken—I mean, just simply put, they were taken. So I think that section of the bill is going to be received.

I myself have received a couple of letters from career colleges or private colleges that are concerned about issues, and my response to them is that I will have their voice heard at the committee. I will make sure that the minister is aware of the concerns that they are putting out in front of us. When I attend committee meetings, I do my best to offer good amendments, and when those amendments are coming that are going to improve the bill, I will be in favour of them and tend to speak as such.

But as far as this particular process that is happening in Bill 43, it is not the beginning. It's not the end. It's a continuation of the improvements that all of us seek. I just didn't buy the tone that it was all wrong-headed and that the pokes that we receive as a government are a duty of an opposition to do. But as far as this bill is concerned, I think we're going to see some improvements during committee.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Simcoe-Grey has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I appreciate the comments all around. You know, on first blush when I looked at the bill, I thought, yeah, I guess the government needs more

power to crack down. And then when you get into the auditor's report, some of it actually has looked at what the government has done with the existing power it has and uses words like "inept" and "squeamishness." The legalese doesn't match the actions of the people that are supposed to be enforcing the laws that we do have, the fraud laws that we have. A lot of what we were just talking about is fraud. But the auditor, Mr. Marin, points out that no one has ever been charged.

There's lots of fraud law out there, so I am somewhat suspicious that if this was good for the sector and good for the legal, registered career colleges, some of them with well over 100 years of history, and the private universities, of course, many of them with almost 150 to 200 years of history, certainly, if you look at St. Mike's at the University of Toronto and a lot of these private institutions that are publicly funded, why weren't they consulted? What does the minister do all day? He hasn't got the biggest portfolio in the world. It's pretty easy. They're pretty organized. They all have associations. To have to tell them at a reception that, "The bill was brought in two days ago, and here's a copy of it," and they didn't know anything about it tells me that there's something wrong. We'll maybe get to it in committee; we'll hear from the people. But if it's such good news here for students and it's such consumer protection legislation, why wouldn't you consult? Why did you sneak it in and then call it a day later for debate? I was lucky I was able to get a briefing on it. What's the hurry on this thing if it's such good news?

I certainly look forward to committee and hearing from the groups themselves that you haven't heard from yet

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to join the debate in support of Bill 43. As has been previously noted, Bill 43 would amend three different acts. One is the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, which is the PSECE act. Basically, to translate, it has to do with universities and colleges. The second set of amendments are to the Private Career Colleges Act. The final set of amendments is to the Ontario College of Art & Design Act.

Let me start with the third one first, the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, because although the language does actually go on for several pages, the primary thing that it does is turn the Ontario College of Art & Design into the newly named Ontario College of Art & Design University. The important thing here is that OCAD is receiving acceptance and recognition as a university. Part of the language in the act sets up a senate and a board of governors that would be similar to other universities in Ontario, and makes sure that what is an extraordinarily good school with a very long history is recognized both nationally and internationally as having full university status. That's the piece of the bill that is perhaps the simplest to understand.

When we look at the rest of the bill, it really is around making sure that we're protecting both the students who attend our post-secondary institutions, be it university or college or private career college, and that we're also protecting the reputation of Ontario's post-secondary education sector. That may seem like a rather strange thing to say on the surface, that it's important to protect the reputation, but that's absolutely key, because if you're a student who has gotten a bachelor of arts or some sort of a designation from a community college, some sort of a diploma, or perhaps you've got your welding ticket from a private career college, no matter what level it is you're dealing at, you want people to look at that and say, "This student got this designation from an Ontario college or university or private college. I know that Ontario has good academic institutions, so I'm going to take this paper at face value. I know that if you got this designation in Ontario, it means something, it is real, and I will accept that this credential means what it says."

When we say we're protecting the reputation of Ontario's post-secondary education sector, that's the logic. We want our students to be able to go out into the workplace and make sure that they can go on to further education or get jobs which recognize the credentials they've got.

1510

So the amendments that we're proposing would strengthen the ability of the government to shut down unscrupulous and unauthorized educational organizations. They would prevent them from taking advantage of students, either those who are already Ontario residents or perhaps, as the member from Beaches–East York mentioned, international students who are newly arrived or offshore. We want to make sure that all our post-secondary institutions are meeting the highest standards of quality and excellence.

We know right now that part of our Open Ontario plan recognizes that more and more people are going to need post-secondary qualifications. Our goal is to have 70% of Ontario students receiving some sort of post-secondary education.

Right now, as we're emerging from a recession, we know that many of the jobs that people were laid off from are not the jobs they're being hired back into, and our colleges, including our private career colleges, play an important role in retraining.

So this is a very important piece of legislation in terms of that protection and reputational piece.

It's interesting: The member from Beaches-East York talked about his past life. One of the things I did in my past life was hire all the graduate teaching assistants in the department of computer science at the University of Guelph. I spent a lot of time reading transcripts literally from all over the world, from various sorts of educational institutions, which meant I got pretty good at looking at transcripts and seeing if they passed the smell test of validity.

It was interesting to me that when I became an MPP, I would occasionally have people coming in to my constituency office with what I thought was rather an odd request, which was, would I certify some piece of paper

as a legitimate educational qualification? As I said, my smell test on these things was reasonably acute. I would look at the piece of paper and think, "I'm not so sure about this," and we would go on the website to try to track down where this particular piece of paper came from. Of course, what we often found was that this was a piece of paper that came from a degree mill, a paper mill, what have you; someplace where people had paid to get a degree without necessarily doing any coursework.

While that is not a common sort of institution here in Ontario—they tend to be other places in the world—we want to make sure that the Ontario brand is equivalent to an excellent education which has been earned through hard work and diligence, and not something that was a piece of fluff or perhaps just bought. That's the purpose that we're looking at with this bill.

Let's dissect this a bit and look specifically at the college and university bill, and then we'll go on and have a bit of a look at the private career college pieces.

The act which is being amended, the PSECE Act, was brought in back in 2000-01, and it expanded the people who could offer degree programs in Ontario. It allowed private institutions in and outside Ontario, public out-of-province institutions, and colleges of applied arts and technology to apply to the minister—that would be the Minister of Colleges and Universities—to give his consent to one of these three offering a degree program. In order for that to make sense, you need to understand that prior to that, for a private institution to be able to grant a degree in Ontario, there had to be a specific piece of legislation about that particular institution, and colleges of applied arts and technology were simply not allowed to offer university degrees.

Since that particular piece of legislation came in, there's a wonderful program now at Humber College, which is the Guelph-Humber program, where there's a partnership and people go to a program at Humber College here in Toronto but actually end up with a University of Guelph degree designation. There have been a lot of these sorts of partnerships and new degrees that have flourished coming from that, where community colleges have been able to expand their role. That was the upside of that act.

There was an effort to increase student protection through transcript protection and prescribed financial security to make sure people weren't giving money to people who couldn't deliver. There was also a quality assurance framework—and again, we're getting into acronyms; sorry, education is really bad at acronymsthe establishment of an advisory board know as PEQAB, or the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board, which actually reviewed these applications for degree programs. What PEQAB, this review board, did was actually set up a program quality review, so if an institution applied to grant a degree, first of all, peers in that particular discipline would have a look at the program qualifications, faculty qualifications, curriculumare the right physical resources available to offer if you need lab space? Is the lab space there to offer the program? There was a quality review. This now applies to undergraduate degrees. Prior to that, there had actually been a similar process at the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities which looked at graduate degrees, master's and Ph.D.s, before universities were allowed to offer those. That took this graduate degree process and brought it down to the bachelor level of the degree-granting process, so there's quite a thorough review now.

There's also an organizational review for private institutions only, again to make sure that they are financially viable so that we don't get into this problem of people collecting money and not delivering.

As I say, this has gone a long way in terms of protecting, but there are still some problems we run into with private institutions parking an office here in Ontario and

purporting to hand out a degree.

A few years ago, the ministry did do some review on how this particular act was working. It had been in effect for six or seven years and it was time to have a look and see if it actually worked. There were some questions and some findings that came about. One of the first issues was, is the process whereby organizations obtain the right to grant degrees addressing all the quality and access issues? The finding was that some organizations were actually saying, "Well, this act doesn't really apply to me, so I can still do whatever I like." There was a problem around some of the private institutions thumbing their noses, essentially, at the ministry and saying, "The act isn't tight enough. It doesn't apply to me."

Are there gaps in the accountability framework? That was another question. What was found was that—and this relates perhaps back to the first question—the terms used in the act actually weren't always defined. If you haven't defined what you're talking about, it's easier for people to slip around the edges. There was a need to define more clearly exactly how the act was to apply.

Then finally, this business of reputation: Was the reputation of the public institutions in Ontario being held whole or was it being interfered with?

1520

The amendments that have come forward address these three issues: first of all, to provide greater definition; secondly, to increase student protection and make sure that there's tighter ability for administrative penalties for restraining and compliance orders when people are found to be in contravention; and thirdly, to allow a bit more flexibility in terms of the PEOAB process. So. for example, if somebody came and wanted to set up a private institution which would be in direct competition with a small public institution, a small program, and in essence knock out the small public program, you wouldn't have to go through the whole quality evaluation. It would simply be that the public program, the one which is publicly funded, publicly controlled, would be the one that would take precedence. You don't have to go through all of this review; it's simply that the public one stands. There's more flexibility in the review process than in the old act. That's what's happening on the college and university side.

Now we come over and we look at what is happening with the private career colleges. Again, as previous speakers have spoken to, there are often and continue to be concerns raised about private career colleges. Again, we have this issue that I mentioned of some argument around terminology and where does the existing act apply, where doesn't it apply—tightening all of that up to make sure that the bad actors just aren't allowed, and there really are some bad actors in the private career college sector.

On the other hand, there are also some very good private career colleges, and we need to make sure that we can recognize both.

The member from Beaches-East York talked about a notoriously bad welding college in Toronto. In Guelph, I've got an absolutely wonderful private welding career college that does a great job. The program that it runs is several months long. At the end of the program you go through exactly the same test to get your welding ticket that you would go through if you were at Conestoga College, so that the certification you come out with is exactly the same as if you had been at the community college. It is simply more accessible for a lot of Guelph students. In fact, it's got such a good reputation that students from the whole area—Cambridge, KW, Fergus and so on-come to this particular career college. I want to make sure I make it clear that we're not denigrating all private career colleges, but that what we're trying to do is sort the wheat from the chaff, as it were. That's not always easy to do sometimes.

What these specific amendments to the Private Career Colleges Act do is ensure that the private career colleges will meet program standards when they are set in a consistent and very timely fashion; that is, you can't take five years to meet new standards, but that some reasonable time frame is recognized. The maximum fines for provincial offences, if you violate this act, are being increased from \$25,000 to \$50,000 for individuals and from \$100,000 to \$250,000 for corporations. I would just say that from my time once upon a time as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Government Services, I know there were a number of acts where, as we were modifying them, we put these fine levels in effect. This is actually quite an ordinary fine level. Also, there are issues around serving notice, because if you've got somebody that's fly-by-night, finding them to serve notice can often be an issue in and of itself.

But the main effect of this will be working with the private career college sector on the whole quality assurance measure and making sure that as program standards are developed, people are actually putting those program standards in place in a timely way, and making sure that, yes, people have a reasonable time to adjust the programs, but that there is a process for getting on with that.

I think it might be useful, just in closing here, to look at the actual bill around private career colleges. Reading legislation is not exactly like reading a novel, as you well know. It tends to be language which is pretty dense. I'm going to, therefore, edit this a bit so that it comes out a little bit closer to understandable English.

I think one of the really key pieces that's in the amendment to the Private Career Colleges Act is that it says that no person or institution shall grant a credential or represent that a credential may be obtained—because in many cases with these career colleges that are a problem, they say you can get the credential, they take your money, and then it turns out they've got no authority to actually deliver that program. So, no person or institution shall grant a credential—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I was interested in hearing the members talk about this particular piece of legislation. The one area where I would find some objection in terms of this act is, if there are two programs that are being offered, one by a private college and one by a public college, evidently this act immediately or almost immediately eliminates the program provided by the private college. Quite frankly, I think we should eliminate the worst program and keep the best program, whether it's in a private college or in a public college.

The advantage that I have experienced through my constituents who have come and talked to me about some of the private colleges is that they seem to have greater contact with the employment community than some of our public colleges.

Unfortunately, in our public college system, the people who are the educators have remained the educators for a long, long period of time, and there doesn't seem to be as much synergy between the teaching staff and the people who employ the people after they graduate from a post-secondary institution, be it private or not.

The other point I would like to make is that I really do wish that the government, in this bill, would enforce and provide the public with some reporting mechanisms that would have to be put on websites by colleges as to their success rates, their employment rates, after the finishing of a program.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Member from Trinity-Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: With all due respect to the member from Guelph, I just want to say that normally I take my whole hour when I do the leads, and I think I only took 30, 33 minutes. The member from Simcoe-Grey had a whole hour, and he only took 30, 33 minutes. I didn't want to do my whole two minutes on this. I really don't. That's why I said "with all due respect"—if the Liberal members could just show us some mercy and not do the whole 20 minutes out of kindness to people like me and the others. We did hear the parliamentary assistant last week. We thought he covered it all. Please, try to discourage the others who might be on the list from taking another 20 minutes. I say that with all due respect, member from Guelph. Please help us.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I'd like to give a two-minute speech on how much I admire and respect the member for Trinity-Spadina—from his lips to God's ears.

We are all about being good team players here, and I just want to commend my friend from Guelph. I also want to recognize the member's extraordinary contributions, both in this House and, before getting here, to public education and the advancement and understanding of public education. Not only has she been brilliant, quite frankly, at developing innovative public policy initiatives in this House, but she has helped us all understand that, in a knowledge economy, the integrity of post-secondary educational institutions is fundamental and that with the Internet, the reputation and brand of both our public and private institutions, whether we want them to or not, become global in an instant.

The reputation of, in my constituency, George Brown or St. Michael's College or Ryerson University—the credibility of those institutions is highly tradable and highly instantaneous. The importance of this particular piece of legislation to better managing that, protecting people who come here to seek that education and protecting the integrity of those institutions is absolutely fundamental.

It is also a huge factor that 80% of the jobs being created in Ontario right now are knowledge- and skill-based jobs. They are innovation, not production, jobs, meaning that these are the portals to job creation, and that also makes their integrity even more critical.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

There being no more questions and comments, the member from Guelph has up to two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you to my colleagues for their comments.

I want to just touch on this public-versus-private business, because when we're talking about the presumption of the priority of publicly funded, this isn't to say that there will never be instances where a private college and a community college are doing exactly the same. I talked about an instance of that. However, if the private duplication of the publicly funded program would undermine the viability of the publicly funded program, there is a public interest in protecting the public program, because it's the one that's going to have the longevity and not potentially disappear when the height of the market disappears.

I also did want to just finish what I was saying, quoting the act, so let's take another run at that. "No person"—or institution—"shall grant ... a credential or represent that a credential may be obtained ... unless the person is registered and both the provision of the vocational program leading to the credential and the granting of the credential have been approved." In other words, we're clarifying the law to make it very clear that if you're not giving an approved credential, you don't belong in the private career college business in Ontario.

To my friend across the way from Trinity-Spadina, the next time he's complaining that I've only taken five minutes when it could have been 20, I will remember that you really want me to be brief, because sometimes it's the other way around. Sometimes it's the other way—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: It is a pleasure to join this debate. Just finishing up on a point that my colleague from Guelph began to make as she was bantering with our good friend from Trinity-Spadina, whom we all love and admire so much here—he's virtually an institution in this place. Sometimes on occasions when the government decides that we're actually going to spare them, that's when our friends across decide they're going to needle us and say, "Well, the government doesn't even want to debate it." Now the government actually wants to talk about this, because this is an important thing that we're doing here.

This is a time for everybody to have a little engagement with the ladies and gentlemen who sit on the other side of the television screen out there. Maybe you've been going through with your channel changer and you've focused on one of us and you've thought, "That's kind of interesting. Maybe I'll just stop and listen in for a second." So we'll have a chance to talk to you briefly about the notion of the private career college, some of the things that have gone wrong that we aim to rectify by this particular piece of legislation. In the course of my time, I'd like to talk a little bit about what I found in my discussions with career colleges. Overwhelmingly, those who operate cleanly and ethically and responsibly constitute the real market niche that those institutions can fill.

The proposals in this act lend more integrity to the concept of a degree. You ask yourself: "What's a degree?" A degree is more than a piece of paper. A degree is something that has changed a little bit of you, probably for life. If the process of getting the piece of paper, which is merely the representation of a degree but in and of itself isn't the learning that has taken place in the classroom and in the workplace; it isn't the changes that have taken place in your mind; it isn't the new set of skills that you've acquired; it isn't the alignment between what you now know and what you need to do to work in a field—the piece of paper is merely a manifestation of the fact that you've done it. And a piece of paper, without that change having happened, without that fundamental bit of training, is just a piece of paper. You can hang it on the wall, you can falsely represent that you know something that you don't, or, in the extreme, you can line the budgie cage with it. But for that piece of paper to have any meaning, to have any integrity, it has to go hand in hand with the type of training that you associate with the word "education."

One of the things that this act does is it clarifies the meaning of a word like "degree." "Degree" means something. What we don't want to have in Ontario is a system that allows an institution to create what we have often read about in the newspaper and seen on television: a degree mill that simply exchanges money in return for that piece of paper—which, as I've just said, if a piece of paper represents learning, it's a degree; if all the piece of

paper represents is the fact that you've sent somebody a cheque or put something on your credit card, you can line the budgie cage with it. And that's not what we want to have in Ontario around the concept of a degree. A bad degree takes all of us who have worked very hard for our degrees, be it at university, be it in a community college or be it in a private career college, and it taints all of our degrees. We need to have a degree that means something. We need to have a degree, in everybody's mind, be consistent with training, with a change having taken place in what you know, and with you being more aligned with a skill or a body of knowledge that you can take and apply to something that earns a living.

If all you have is a cursory shadow of a curriculum, which some institutions do have, you shouldn't be in the private career college business. What you need to have is a teaching infrastructure, a rigorous system of examinations and a quality-control mechanism in your institution that ensures the integrity of the word "education" and the word "degree," and that's what Bill 43 does. It's really not that hard. It tells the student, many of whom or most of whom are actually working, or parents themselves that they will get what they've paid for. That's really what students and employers have asked: "Will we get what we paid for? Will we get education and training that are valuable so that that degree actually has some meaning?"

Among the things that this piece of legislation does set out to finally get rid of is a system in which an institution, an entity, an organization or an individual sets up an office in Ontario to simply grant degrees to students who are required to do very little actual work in return. The degree may be something they can represent and say, "I've got a degree in this from that institution," but again, it takes the degrees that all of us have achieved and it cheapens them, and we can't have that. You can't allow an institution to say, "I'm going to grant a degree. You can represent the degree as being meaningful in the workplace but you don't have to do any work." Aside from the inherent unfairness of that, if it means that someone is taking training to work in, for example, health care, or how about engineering, would you expect someone who's designing an electrical system in a building to have gone out and bought a degree without actually having been trained on how to do the wiring? That's not a good idea. That's not even healthy, let alone safe.

1540

The other thing that this bill should address is the notion of tailoring a fee for a program so that you can take an amount that you may be eligible for from an employer or, more often than not, from government and you gross it up. So if, for example, the program will pay, for argument's sake, 85% of such-and-such a program if you can produce a facsimile that says, "All right. This student has registered for the program," then you're reimbursed it. They'll charge you a certain amount of money and then they'll give you an invoice that says that you've paid this much more. It's fraudulent and we don't want that to happen. And it's really easy to do. If it says

you're eligible for 85% of this amount of money up to a limit of that, you take whatever the limit is, you divide by 0.85, and that's the amount that you have grossed it up. Then you can charge the student the maximum that either your employer or the government has given you. All you've done is to take money from the taxpayer or from your employer, but no real training has taken place and all you've got is a budgie-cage-liner of a degree. That's not what the province of Ontario wants, that's not what employers want and that's certainly not what serious students want. That's the sort of thing that the province is doing.

A lot of newcomers to Canada, as a few of my colleagues have mentioned, scramble to get into Canadian universities and Canadian career colleges so that they can study and prepare themselves for a future in this country. Many believe that private career colleges are as tightly governed as are public community colleges and public universities, and many of them are very surprised to find that too much of the operations of a private career college are really a bit of the Wild West. They'll find that suddenly, the program that they've been working on, as some of the speakers have mentioned, doesn't lead to the certification that they've believed that it will. They'll find that the program suddenly closes, or so does the entire private career college. What this bill does is it gives the province some teeth to go in and correct those measures, and for that reason alone it's a good idea.

I'm going to talk more about some of the business models that private career colleges can adopt, many of which do. There's a lot of latitude for private career colleges to offer programs. For example, they can offer either eclectic or esoteric courses for people who are not really streaming to a degree or orienting themselves to a profession, a trade or even a particular occupation. They may just be people who are looking more for personal development or continuing ed or, indeed, for a stream of industry-specific programs that, from the vantage point of the local industries, they can operate much as professional development.

For example, in one of the sectors I worked in before I was elected, the information technology sector, as a rule of thumb, people who work in that sector should be devoting somewhere between 10 and 15 days per year to themselves in professional development and to keeping their skills current. In many of the professions, the requirement is somewhat similar. The number of days may vary, but the institutes or governing bodies have, either as guidelines or as rules, some pretty hard and fast numbers in which you've got to devote that amount of time to keeping your skills up to date in the marketplace so that what you can offer your clients or your employer is, in fact, relevant and state of the art.

Certainly, going back to my IT example, as I have found so very clearly since I have been elected, the era in which I've considered myself reasonably proficient in writing code and developing for the Web—my skills rust very quickly. So if you're not actually out there practising and, more importantly, staying up to date with the

technology and developments in your field, you're going to be left behind very quickly.

This is one of the niche markets that a private career college, if it has a good, aggressive business model, can take and adopt; because if there's, for example, a cluster of similar industries around, you can find that it's a fairly well-paying occupation to go out and find the good-quality trainers, who themselves stay up to date in their field, and to be able to offer specific industry or occupation-specific programs to local industries, be that, in some cases, IT, software, networking or, in other cases, medical technology, pharmaceuticals and whatnot.

As well, the bulk of the private career colleges in Ontario do grasp this market opportunity. Among the things that they do is partner with some top-quality instructors to offer just this type of training. Private career colleges will look for opportunities with local businesses and local industries to offer programs that add value to those industries and, in so doing, become part of the service sector to the local economy and add value to those industries by ensuring that, without a very long commute, people can get job-specific upgrades to their skills and professional development that allow them to be more valuable employees, not merely to their own employer but certainly, in the broader span of their own career, to become more marketable employees in and of themselves. It allows people to enhance their opportunity to gain different employment.

As well, a private career college can offer programs that are not just degree-path courses but that may just have an audience in the local community. In a very diverse and affluent and eclectic market such as, for example, downtown Toronto, if you pick up some of the local tabloids, you'll see very clearly that a lot of the private career colleges do offer just that type of program that deals with all manner of areas such as personal development and whatnot that they find their local neighbourhood responds to—fair game. That's one of the strengths of the private career college system.

These are market niches that can change very quickly. They are ones that tend to be local or idiosyncratic in some respects, but these are market niches that the private career college system is uniquely equipped to capitalize on. When they do, and wherever they do, good for them. Those are the good actors, and we want them to keep doing that because that's the type of private career college that's a credit to the system and a real value to the province.

It's the ones that don't, who figure that they can print up a degree and sell the degree without the underlying training, that this bill aims to get at with some measures that have teeth—and the measures do have teeth.

As I said, in addition to defining such terms as "degree," the bill defines the terms "educational institution" and "distance education." You think to yourself, "Isn't that self-evident?" But if you think it's self-evident, then you've passed up the fact that if you want to operate in an unscrupulous manner, that would be a good opportunity to sort of play fast and loose with the notion of

distance education, or to play fast and loose with what we would normally consider an educational institution.

An educational institution isn't a briefcase and it isn't a car trunk and it's not a hotel room. An educational institution is something that has the infrastructure to offer a very clear methodology and quality-control standards that say, "This is our path toward where you start and the body of knowledge that you think, and that we represent, that you'll have when the process is over."

Along the way, there have to be some milestones and stepping stones, such as different courses, a syllabus, examinations, tests and whatnot, that determine whether or not you, as the student, have acquired them and they, as the educational institution, have actually taught it. Again, it's very common sense stuff, but that's what Bill 43 aims to do.

1550

It's very congruent with the province's long-term plan. Looking at Open Ontario, the long-term plan for the province over the next few years, among its objectives is to enable an additional 30,000 unemployed workers to get training, thus bringing to nearly 60,000 the total participants since the Second Career strategy began as recently as June 2008. This is a lot of people.

This particular means of dispensing training—the private career college—can play a really important role in that. Second Career doesn't say you have to go to this institution or that institution, or that you have to take this program or that program. It does say that you have to start from where you are, have a vision of where you're going and delineate a series of steps to help you get there. If you can, then the province of Ontario will help you get there with some support.

This is an enormous market opportunity for private career colleges that can step up if, for example, there is a local industry that very clearly is transitioning some workers from one set of skills to another or there's a new industry moving in, in some force. The private career college can sit down and meet with some of the people there and say, "Here's the general range of skills of people around here. What is it that you're looking for? Presumably you'd like to hire locally." Most businesses will say, "Sure, we'd love to hire locally."

In many cases, as new industries move in, a lot of the local businesses are saying that this isn't just hiring people to behave as robots to do production. As numerous other speakers have said, education today means adding value with what you know. A lot of the value is added with what is in your mind, and you do it not so much with your hands and your muscles as with your brain. In this respect, we need private career colleges as part of the solution, not part of the problem.

This bill addresses those few private career colleges whose activities and business practices have made them part of the problem. This particular bill aims, with some very solid, concrete measures, to take the institutions that have been part of the problem and either have them rectify the problem or turn that mandate over to somebody who can actually do the job.

In the longer term, this is going to enable Ontario to continue its progress in the last few years. Since 2008, some of the province's programs, such as Job Connect, have served nearly half a million clients; the employment assistance service, 367,000 clients; rapid re-employment and training services, 120,000; 2009 summer jobs and services, 110,000; literacy and basic skills, 101,000; apprenticeship registration, 50,000. In all, nearly a million Ontarians get skills training and employment assistance annually, a million Ontarians who need private career colleges doing those things that private career colleges with a responsible, ethical, well-regulated, well-run business plan can be doing in a solid, progressive, goingforward manner, because that's what Ontario is about. Ontario is about going forward, and that's why this bill should be passed as soon as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I certainly agree with my friend from Mississauga—Streetsville that our residents have to be very cautious when dealing with private career colleges. They have a place, and there are a lot of good ones—certainly valuable ones. But when you consider the cost of the courses the private career colleges offer or the degrees that they offer or whatever they call them—diplomas—at a time when people are out of work, and sometimes they're getting back in the job market, it can be very devastating to enrol and find out that, basically, the diploma is really not worth the paper it's written on. I think he cautioned people on that.

I was looking on TV the other day, and there was a career college—I think it's in my riding—that was advertising: "If you want to become a personal trainer, enrol in a career college." I was sort of saying, "A personal trainer?" I don't know; do you really have to enrol in a career college to become a personal trainer?

I've always said to people looking for this type of training, "Make sure that what you want is not offered at a local, publicly regulated and funded community college." We have some of the best community colleges in the world here. George Brown, for instance, is one of the best community colleges. It offers incredible courses on gourmet cooking, baking and culinary arts. It's incredible. So I always tell people: "Please, find out what the cost is and what's offered at the community college. It'll probably cost you a lot less, and that diploma or degree you get from a community college is worth a lot more than one from some of these private career colleges."

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Seeing no more questions and comments, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I acknowledge my colleague from Eglinton-Lawrence, who, as always, has the best interests not merely of his constituents in mind but of all Ontarians, in the roles that he has been given both within the executive council and as a member who has served this province for more than 15 years now. The member

for Eglinton-Lawrence has put his stamp on so many different areas. He is a real credit to the province, and it's a small wonder that he's always very handily re-elected in the riding of Eglinton-Lawrence.

He echoes the concern that certainly we all feel, that clients and potential clients of private career colleges look carefully when they're shopping for a place to buy their education. We say to everybody who is looking for training opportunities or a chance to get ahead in Canada, in Ontario: "By all means, consider a private career college, but do your own due diligence. See if the program that you're looking at is offered somewhere else. Compare your prices, compare your outcomes and talk to some of the students who have been through the program. If you possibly can, see if you can get some independent validation from employers of the value of the program that you're going into."

That's what the member for Eglinton-Lawrence has pointed out to people. I think that's very good advice,

and I encourage people to take it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Dave Levac: Before we wave the white flag—and I know that there's a member over there who has pulled out his handkerchief and is waving it—I made the commitment that I would make some comments on this particular proposal that we have before us.

As I speak, I want to touch on a few things. I want to touch upon what's happening in my riding with this particular topic, the good news that's happening in my riding regarding post-secondary education, and then some comments that I've received from some of the private colleges in my riding. I committed, as I always have, to make sure that if they do have concerns, it comes to the Legislature. I want to bring the voice of Brant to Queen's Park, instead of simply saying that Queen's Park is going to do something to my riding. That voice will be heard.

I want to make an observation about the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills, who talked to us about the differential between the private colleges and the public colleges, which he—and I agree with him, but I want to talk about that. He says that we should actually be supporting the best, and I do subscribe to that, as he does, but I want to make a comment—just that at the tail end as he was speaking, he was talking about how we might better show the people what kind of success rates are out there. I do agree with him, but I do want to remind himand maybe I'll deal with it right now-that the member knows that there are postings of each of the colleges in terms of their graduation rate. They also post-at least the college that I'm aware of posts-their job placement success rate on the skills that they teach in the college. So I don't know if they've broken it down college by college in the province, and I would bow to his knowledge if he can clarify that, but I do want to make it clear that he is on the right track and I support that, but I also would suggest, respectfully, that they do post those.

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Mohawk College in my riding, which has a campus from Hamilton into Brant, does post success rates in job

placements of the courses they teach, which means that if it's about an 85% placement rate—in some cases I've seen it as high as a 95% to 96% placement rate—it says that when you take this course, you know from the previous years that this is the success rate of this particular course in getting placement in a job. I believe that's exactly what he's headed for, and I would support him on that if something comes forward to try to do that. Maybe we can talk about that at committee level when we get the bill to committee, which is going to happen.

That's one I wanted to deal with immediately, because he and I do see eye to eye on that. I believe we should be looking at the best of all and the most success, and also information for students to have before they sign up. Because if they could go to a site, if they could go to the government or somewhere and see what the successes are of all colleges that are offering that information—we need to know whether or not the legitimacy is there.

We would also have, and I think you would agree with this, to endeavour to ensure that the information that they're posting is legitimate. I know that there are some colleges that have posted some pretty phoney information about how spectacular they are, their success rate, and that they're an internationally known college. That's the one area I think I'd like to see some debate and discussion on. As far as I'm concerned, I do know that, locally, the colleges and universities in my riding do have that information available and it is done.

Now, the second piece to that—more of an, "Are you aware...?"—the Maclean's magazine edition that comes out on an ongoing basis puts an awful lot of that information inside of it. It has become almost like a handbook for all universities; whether or not they like the idea, it's happened. When Maclean's comes out and you see this posting of all the different colleges and universities and that they're doing this review, they do a pretty substantial job on getting that information out for the general public in terms of their ranking, not just professional ranking but ranking from students. I would also suggest to you that there's another role to be played in that aspect.

Let me take a look at the rest of the review I wanted to do. I had wanted to talk about my local riding. We have Wilfred Laurier, from Waterloo, who has opened up a campus. In a very short time it is now larger that when I attended it in Waterloo. When I attended it in Waterloo—that's to tell you how old I am, to the member from Trinity—Spadina—the population of Laurier at that time was 1,900 students. It was the year they transitioned from Waterloo Lutheran to Wilfred Laurier, and they chose it because the letters matched, I guess; I'm not sure how that worked.

But anyway, 1,900 students back then, and today, right in Brantford, Laurier's campus of Laurier Waterloo is 2,500 students, inclusive of another agreement they've got with Nipissing as a teachers' college.

Mr. Jeff Leal: How's that going?

Mr. Dave Levac: That is just going great guns. It's a great addition to our community. As a matter of fact, our

city council has endorsed a university sector right in the downtown area. Mohawk College is a partner in that. So we've got three very strong universities and a college that are working together, along with the municipality and the Grand Valley Educational Society, who are bringing those together.

Now, these types of changes that we're talking

Mr. Jeff Leal: What about the Bell museum?

Mr. Dave Levac: My friend from Peterborough asked me how the Bell Homestead is doing. Its 100th anniversary is coming up in terms of Alexander Graham Bell, but—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Is there a party?

Mr. Dave Levac: —as we talk about that we're going to have an opportunity for us to celebrate that. But I digress. I'm going to come back onto the topic that I was chosen to speak on.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I didn't mean to throw you off.

Mr. Dave Levac: No, no; it's all relative because we saw what happened with the invention of the telephone, which happened in Brantford, not Boston, Massachusetts. It happened in Brantford. The evolution of the phone took place and now the evolution, as I've always said in this House, continues with this particular bill on the evolution of post-secondary education.

There's nothing wrong with career colleges. As a matter of fact, private career colleges provide a great service to our province, except, the fact is—and we all would agree to this; I've heard it from every opposition party, I've heard it from our own side—we need to do something about the ones that are just in it for a buck. That's what we're going to do with this particular bill. That's one of the sections that I'm going to talk about.

Laurier, Mohawk, Nipissing—a growing concern. It is continuing to grow. We are now looking at estimates of that partnership expanding to over 10,000 to 15,000 students in the downtown area. Can you imagine what it was like for a community the size of Brantford?

As a matter of fact, I can give this as a statistical, because in 1999, when I was elected, we did a study and found out that Brantford was the largest community in Ontario that did not have a university at the time. We now have one, and it's a growing concern. Quite frankly, it is a beautiful fit for our community. We're keeping some of our kids home. We're saving money for the parents of those kids and the kids themselves. They don't have to spend the money on apartments and everything, and they're staying home—a very high local turnout. But also, we're spreading out and we're drawing people from all over the place. We're now taking out-of-province students who are showing up at Laurier Brantford and Nipissing for teachers' college. So we're doing well.

I want to go back to the career colleges. I've made this commitment, and I've already received some emails and some writings from some of the career colleges that have indicated concern. My immediate response—I try to get a 24-hour return. I immediately indicated to them that their voice would be heard at Oueen's Park and that I would

ensure that their emails were sent directly to the minister and submitted to the committee when they review the bill. They have some questions and concerns about the wording of the private college section, and that's going to be taken care of. We're going to try to find some responses for them to assure them that we're not out to knock off career colleges. What we're here to do is knock off the fraudsters. We're here to get rid of the people who do damage to Ontario students and, as mentioned by the member from Beaches—East York, to international students. Quite frankly, we're going to try to close the door as best we can in preventing them from getting ripped off. I do believe he's in support of that. He has spoken about that several times in the House, about international students getting ripped off.

One of the things that I think we need to also address is the overview of the bill itself. The bill actually deals with three sections from three different bills. The proposed legislation amends the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000; the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005; and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002. That third one is one that no one has any problems with. I'm quite sure that that should be able to be accepted and receive support right across the board, because what we're basically doing there is we're going to change it from the Ontario College of Art & Design Act to the Ontario College of Art & Design University Act.

Quite frankly, it's going to have full degree-granting privileges, as I know that those who are involved in this were—actually, Speaker, just as a little bit of a side note, I actually received an acceptance into the Ontario college of art, just after I received my acceptance into teachers' college. I made a career path choice. I didn't turn them down; I had already made a choice.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: You took the road less travelled. Mr. Dave Levac: I took the road travelled more, actually, this time, but in terms of the Ontario college of art—a very, very fine international reputation. So I'm glad that the government can work together and have that taken care of.

The amendments would further protect the students and strengthen Ontario's reputation for excellence in post-secondary education at home and abroad. A lot of things that sometimes we lose sight of are, when we've got something that is as admired around the world as our post-secondary education and the way our health care system is, we tend to focus on what's wrong with it. Well, the one thing that I want to stand and say is that for all intents and purposes, when you take a look around the world, the post-secondary education institutions are pretty mighty fine. They're good; they're excellent. We have excellent teachers, we have great administration and we have people who are working very hard to ensure that our students get the best.

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That's the other part of this discussion that I know the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills reinforced, and that I want to bring up again. He indicated that we want the best. So while we are bringing these three sections of three different acts together in one bill, one of the things I would like to see us do is make sure, when we go to committee, that we look at the pieces we need to improve and see, from the opposition and indeed from the government—because sometimes we've done that as well—that we offer amendments that are going to strengthen the bill and make it even better: better not just because it's a piece of legislation, but because it's going to have an impact in a positive way on students who will be attending post-secondary education.

I also want to mention the fact that I've actually seen in the back covers of comic books: "Bob's university. Get your Ph.D. Send us \$500, and we'll send you a piece of paper that says you have a Ph.D." The old comic book thing is still alive and well. I couldn't believe that I saw it. I don't remember the actual name of the university, but it was something like Bob's university, California, or whatever, and you could literally buy a Ph.D.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: On a point of order: Perhaps the speaker would let us know how often he is

reading comics.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): That's not a point of order, as the honourable member well knows.

Continue.

Mr. Dave Levac: Whether or not I read comic books isn't the point. The point is that it was handed to me and somebody said, "You've got to get a load of this. How do you like that?" How's that for a recovery? I opened up the back cover, and there it was: "Bob's university: Get your Ph.D. Mail in \$500, and we'll mail this wonderful certificate back to you." I thought to myself, "Holy mackerel, we've got to stop that."

Do you know what? There are people who will actually send in and hang that up on the wall, and therein lies the problem. If we're not ready to take that on, then what we're saying is that mediocrity—that little sham, that

fraud that's going on—is acceptable.

I do believe we will have agreement on all sides, including the private colleges that are indeed legitimate, as has been pointed out by many people in the House today. What they're talking about is, we're not here to beat up the ones that are the best, that deliver, that get jobs, that produce numbers that say the money I spent is worthwhile because I've entered the world of work, or I've continued my education and have legitimately been accepted by another institution because it is legitimate, or it helped with the rest of my education. There's nothing wrong with that at all. As a matter of fact, we applaud them. But what we really want to do is get after the back-of-the-comic-book problem. The back of the comic book is basically, "I've got a piece of paper for sale."

Having said that, I leave you with a couple of ideas that I think are important, which we need to not skirt but get around in depth. I have had some constituents approach me because of these private career college situations they're focused on, which have a very large impact on their OSAP, and it happens to be negative. I hope we can also, inside this bill, discuss the impact OSAP has for

students and the money being put out of their pockets. We're talking about people who want to involve themselves in Second Career opportunities as well.

One other question I had, and the minister is looking into it for me, is how does this impact bursaries and scholarships? Does it have a negative impact on that? Those are other questions that I think we need to delve into to ensure, as we're looking at this phase of fixing post-secondary education, that some of the concerns raised in this particular bill are part of that discussion that we need to evaluate.

One of the things we have set as a lofty goal for Ontario is a 70% post-secondary education graduation rate. The question I would ask is, will the three amendments to these three acts under one bill have an impact on the opportunities afforded for that graduation rate? If we get this right once we go to committee, I think we can land on a "yes" on that one.

The amendments will ensure the strength of the postsecondary education programs offered here in Ontario and that they're of the highest quality and meet our standards of excellence. Again, rising to the top and making sure that we get the best of the best is a good way to operate.

We also have the expansion of degrees in our programs for the universities and colleges, and we have seen already that happening, where certain colleges have removed the "college" designation and moved into "university." There was Ryerson, and now we're looking at the Ontario college of art.

The amendments will clarify the application of the act by defining certain terms such as "degree," "educational institution" and "distance education." Whenever you make changes, as we have in the three previous bills, there's always somebody scanning it, always somebody going through it to find out how they can put their hooks into it. They have no intention of worrying about the students. That is a standard expectation of any scam artist, carpetbagger, whoever you will. They always look for ways to get around the edges.

I see the white flag waving. As the white flag is waving, I'm just going to wrap up by saying—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The Lord is merciful.

Mr. Dave Levac: I'm trying to be as merciful as possible. The member from Trinity-Spadina, whom I admire and am good friends with: I understand that you actually were listening on the TV in another room and you thought it was important to be here to have it wrapped up. So I'm going to wrap up very quickly by saying to you that I believe this particular bill is a step in the right direction. As I've always maintained, when we put a bill on the top, it's not the be-all and end-all of everything; it's a step. Step, march, arm's-length—a step.

We hope that we will get support. I understand that the critic from the Tory party has indicated that he's not going to recommend to the party to receive the bill—that was his recommendation, to turn it down in second reading—but in my understanding of how the NDP have responded so far, they plan to support the bill and will

work with us during committee to try to tweak it, to make it better and see if we can get that number from 31 to 1. We'll move forward on that.

Speaker, thank you for your indulgence. Thank you for providing us with an opportunity to have this dialogue about post-secondary education.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I want to thank the member for Brant. He brought forward many of the ideas and concerns that I have previously stated on this bill. But there's one other thing that I don't think any speaker has mentioned, and perhaps other members have experienced this in their constituency offices. When a constituent comes to me and talks about their ability to finance a program, often because they are out of work at that particular time, I find them in an extremely vulnerable position, a position where they're trying to get back into the workforce as quickly as possible and they're trying to find a more meaningful career going forward. I find them to be in a very vulnerable position as to what people will tell them that the results of entering into a particular program might be. I think it would behoove us all, and it would behoove all governments, to require those people who are providing financial assistance, in any form that might be, to people who are going particularly through a retraining program or a program where you have more mature adults trying to access—it would behoove governments to require those funding agencies to provide the applicant with clear, unequivocal data as to the success rate of those programs in numbers so that those people who are in a vulnerable position will get clear information that isn't hazed over by people who are trying to sell the program.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just want to say to my friend from Brant that we're going to be supporting this bill because it's a little step, so why not? I also want to tell him that I surrendered an hour ago, that I threw the white flag over an hour ago, just in case they forgot.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: The member from Trinity-Spadina has been begging us to put him out of his misery, at least in my words, not necessarily his. I think he said, "What more can be said? It's all been covered." But the member from Brant, in the time he had, brought to the debate a whole spectrum that we really hadn't covered effectively. I hope the member from Trinity-Spadina, both on-site and remotely, was able to catch his entire 20 minutes, because I know he learned a lot that'll be helpful in committee in that regard.

I didn't have the opportunity last time to comment on the strengths that we have in my own riding. I have campuses of Centennial College and the University of Toronto Scarborough campus, and adjacent to me on the east side within Durham region, although not in my riding, are Durham College and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology—and that doesn't even speak to the presence of the private career colleges. Within my own hometown, we used to have the Toronto School of Business, which was subsequently purchased, restructured and renamed Trillium College as part of the private career college system.

I think some of the points that are being made—we want these to be the best they can be. We need to weed out the bad actors, and we need to provide the resources and support necessary, both for the public and the private systems that exist out there, so that whether it be young people or adults who are retraining, they're going away with absolutely the best possible—I see the member from Trinity—Spadina over here, and he's begging us to move along. I know he's anxious to see this get to committee, where he can add his voice and then bring forward—as the member for Brant was saying, tweak the bill, if that's what's required, to make it a better piece of legislation and usher it back here in the shortest possible time so that we can act on it expeditiously.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I have to tell you, I'm surprised by what an aggressive and engaged debate this is. Members just seem to be leaping to their feet, which I think comes as real oxygen to our post-secondary education institutions, both private and public—that we're really giving this piece of legislation the full and complete unrelenting attention that it's due, and my friend and colleague from Trinity—Spadina has been noting that with great enthusiasm. I actually thought the very important work we did on the accounting professions was the high-water mark in public debate since I've been here, but I think this is certainly rivalling that for the depth and breadth and just the sheer level of controversy and the provocative nature of this legislation. This is very, very critical.

I want to acknowledge the comments of the member for Carleton-Mississippi Mills. When I was a young fellow going to Carleton University, Claude Bennett was my MPP, a very fine man.

Mr. Jeff Leal: A very distinguished man.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: He was. That seat is now represented by our Premier.

I remember living in Ontario when Bill Davis was our Premier. It was remarkable because of the level of commitment that that government had to post-secondary education. I know some of my colleagues in the House were here sitting on the government benches at that time.

I remember arriving there, and I remember going to Carleton University. I was all of 17 years old. I had managed to skip past CEGEP in Quebec where I'd grown up. They handed you a deck—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. The member from Brant has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Dave Levac: I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the members from Carleton–Mississippi Mills,

Trinity-Spadina, Pickering-Scarborough East and Toronto Centre. I thank them all for their sound discussions.

To the member from Trinity-Spadina, this is a takeno-prisoner opportunity as opposed to waving the white flag. We're not allowed to take any prisoners here. We want to make sure that all our points are made.

The member from Toronto Centre is obviously a very masterful, strong community man who understands that when we get this right, communities having post-secondary education, career colleges, in them will be better for it. I want to thank him for his comments.

The member for Pickering-Scarborough East reminds the listeners and this place of his commitment to the campuses in his riding. I too rededicate myself to the campuses in my riding. I want to explain to you a quick little anecdote about that. I was able to talk to the then Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and, for the first time, offer a singular grant to a campus alone, not to the university itself, just straight to the campus. We were able to get some money to help build that campus. We continue to talk to this government and the federal government, and the municipalities are on side. We will continue to grow that wonderful institution in our community, right in the downtown, that is growing a university and post-secondary education for the community and abroad. I want to thank him for that.

Now, the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills: Yes, I do agree with you. I do believe that information is extremely important and delicate during the time frame that you're talking about, but I think it should be across the board. Quite frankly, yes, I do agree that somebody being laid off who has a family, a house, a car payment, has to get to work. They want to know what the success rate is. They should have that information, and I'm fully agreeing with that. You'll see in Hansard that I did make a comment about that, indicating that I believe we should be doing a better job with that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I apologize, Madam Speaker. I thought I was doing 20 minutes before, but now I am.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You've only got 18 minutes. Mr. Glen R. Murray: My friend from Trinity-Spadina reminds me that now I only have to do 18.

I'll just pick up where I left off before, which was to say that that was a particular period in time. In a very non-partisan way, I think every party that comes to power, though we don't like to admit it, inherits good things of the governments that came before us. The reason I was leading to that is, because of the quality of our education that we're trying to protect, people have been recognized, and it was just announced the other day that Bill Davis has won the Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award for his work in education and citybuilding. I think that if you live long enough, and you get far enough away from politics, people will finally appreciate you. I think that's the lesson for all of us.

But that was a different time. When I went to Carleton University, I remember getting a stack of computer cards,

and some of the members present who were in that twilight period between the time before we had computers and when we got them lived with those large machines with large tapes and large stacks of computer cards. It wasn't very automated, because you lined up to take your courses and the registration process was that they fed these cards through—I think you had six or seven cards—and you only got your courses if the machine didn't spit out one of your cards and you had to go all the way back to the beginning. This was an absolutely incredibly insane, repetitive process that one went through long before the days of laptops.

But there was also a sense that information travelled much slower. You didn't have Internet universities. Long-distance learning was a process of telephones and paper. It wasn't the kind of process we have today, when my partner was studying nursing at UBC, never actually once going there, doing all the technical work around perioperative nursing and advanced surgical nursing from the comfort of our home on a laptop computer, something—and I'm not that far out of university—that was unimaginable back then.

It has also opened up in the knowledge economy training, education and apprenticeship, private and public, to any numbers of players. As you can sell knowledge and access to knowledge and sell credentials over the Internet, as well as use it as an incentive for people to come to this country, the need for regulation is much more complicated, much more essential than it was 30 or 25 years ago, when our educational institutions were physical, when you had to show up, when things were done with paper, and when it was easier to verify things because the sheer volume and numbers involved—the number of courses—were not required. This legislation starts the foundation of building a more modern and progressive and agile regulatory system for the times we now live in.

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The other piece of this, for me, is particularly important, because Ontario really is Canada's education capital.

I want to commend my friend from Brantford for the extraordinary work and leadership he has provided in really working with the mayor, city council, local educators and business leaders to realize the development of a very important educational cluster with Laurier and now with other post-secondary institutions.

One of our other immigrants, Richard Florida, makes the point that a university or a post-secondary college is probably the biggest determinant between those communities that are successful and those that aren't. So for a community like Cornwall, building educational capacity is really important if it is going to become more—after the deindustrialization of some small towns, whether we're talking Wallaceburg or Cornwall, having a post-secondary institution is really critical to that community's capacity to participate in the knowledge economy.

Because these brands are global, because knowledge is created almost in a second and transmitted globally

within a second, verifiability of knowledge is difficult. Reputations and credibility of credentials become really critical. For our government, that has been a huge struggle. I'm hoping, actually, that the foundations of better regulation of our private and public institutions and the setting of standards will eventually lead us to a point in the not-too-distant future where all educational institutions, whether they're in India or Poland or Chile, are tradable; that we actually have international standards for degrees, to verify competency and content. Until each region and each nation establishes that, we are going to have continuing difficulties in recognizing foreign credentials.

That is important because the average skilled worker now spends fewer than three years in one city and less than one year in one job. These are folks who don't go looking for someone to create a job for them; they're the folks who create jobs where they go. To get the best and the brightest, which we are trying to do with Open Ontario, means that our institutions have to be verified, fraud-proofed and have their reputations protected so that their brand and the value of the degree is resilient going forward as we attract more people from the world to not just gather knowledge, get their credentials and do their research and learning here—but also because that's the best attraction we have in building Ontario's skilled workforce. It's also important for long-term equity, as we will hopefully be able to export this verification of the quality of credentials, so that when people get degrees in other places they are completely portable. We are really moving, in a knowledge economy, to almost a global citizenship for knowledge workers, which means that their credentials have to increasingly become globally tradable.

Also, our economy is becoming so specialized that new degrees, new specializations, discoveries—the current work being done in my own constituency of Toronto Centre on genome work is creating entire new subspecialties, areas of expertise and new credentials all the time that are needed to work in those fields.

So as we advance knowledge, as we advance specialization, we increasingly have to be able to verify that. That is a peer-reviewed process, and I think it's extremely important that we are formalizing and extending peer review work and not bureaucratizing or politicizing this, but pushing it back to the colleges and to post-secondary institutions and universities to have a framework for self-policing amongst credible peers. To systematize that process, I think, is really very critical.

If you look at the last 20 years, the biggest shift in Ontario and in the world has been from an economy where wealth was generated by production to an economy today where wealth is generated by innovation, and that is very hard, because not only are degrees difficult to measure, as we are discussing today, but it is a lot easier to measure production assets.

It's very easy to understand that jobs are being created in your town when there's an auto plant or when there's a plant opened to make toasters. The skill levels are very visible. People see assembly taking place; they can watch and see production. Production and the manufacture of goods are very easy to measure. Exports of goods, the sheer volume of them, are much easier to measure.

But in almost the entire industrialized world, those jobs are in decline. They are in decline even in places that were recently industrialized, like Poland, where they're estimating that in some areas, 75% of the industrial jobs created since the liberation of Poland as an independent state have already disappeared and have moved to lower-income, emerging industrial economies where people are paid less; where the skills that we're talking about, that need to be certified and researched and covered, are not required; and where plants are automated and use 25% of the number of employees.

What we're experiencing in Ontario is that education in itself has become an industry. Knowledge is so pervasive—required for 70% of jobs right now. Just in the GTA, Madam Speaker, where you and I have the privilege of representing folks, 80% of the jobs being created right now are knowledge-based jobs, 20% are service-based jobs, and there's a net decline in manufacturing. That is true in Michigan, in the UK, in France. It is even true in northern Italy. In every industrial economy, those jobs that do not require university or post-secondary education—you could go to a vocational school or apprentice—are disappearing.

In Hamilton, from where my colleague for Hamilton Mountain hails and for which she has been such a great advocate—and as she is very aware—26,000 industrial jobs have disappeared in the last 20 years that they've been tracking it; 63,000 knowledge and service jobs have emerged in Hamilton. You don't often see them. We will often hear that a bottling company or a brewery has closed in Hamilton, and that gets a great deal of attention. But the expansion, because of McMaster and Mohawk and the incredible educational infrastructure in that city and the emergence of companies that mostly have 10, 15, 25, 30 people, with jobs that pay better than the jobs that were there before, is not as visible.

The quality of those companies depends on the quality of their workforce. Having competent engineers, researchers, artists, performers and designers is critical to quality control of product, because what we are selling is a package of knowledge. We are selling something that is only verifiable based on the quality of the education and the credentials of the people producing that product.

When you talked about German engineering, everyone knew what that was because they saw it in their BMW, Volkswagen or Audi. When you're talking about knowledge that does not in itself produce a direct product but is sold, the quality of the knowledge economy is based on our ability to verify the institutions that create the knowledge and produce the research and to maintain a high level of quality professionalism.

There was a comment made about Ontario's educational institutions. I think you'd be hard-pressed to find a place in the world that is starting from so far ahead of the game

I've lived in Ontario. I worked on a dairy farm in Glengarry. I had the great pleasure of working for the

federal government in Ottawa and ran my own company there. I've lived in Toronto twice. When I was mayor of Winnipeg, I worked very closely with my friends collaboratively, regionally, in northwestern Ontario, and what

an extraordinary part of the province that is.

Everywhere I've lived in Ontario, the implications of the shift from production to innovation have been completely different—and it has been brutal. My friend from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex is one of the folks who get this. As a farmer herself, she understands how important skills are, especially when you have to create them on your own. There's a place in her community that she has advocated for powerfully called Wallaceburg, and Wallaceburg lost about 11,000 jobs in the tool and die industry, which is why our government stepped forward so aggressively to support the auto sector—not because of the GMs and the Chryslers so much, though they're important, but because any revival in Wallaceburg at any time in the future requires us to recreate the supply chain that those tool and die companies found so critical to sustaining themselves.

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How do we reinvent, as we are through Second Career right now, jobs for people who are 55, whose experience is in the tool and die industry? That is a huge challenge that would scare off many people in public policy, but when they do get that and when you're an older worker and you haven't been in high school in 30 or 25 years, the quality of the credential you're going to get is important because you're likely going to have to move.

We in Ontario have been blessed that we have it. I've lived in Cape Breton and I've lived on the prairies. The reality is that if you want to get jobs in certain areas, you can no longer get them in the small and mid-sized centres outside of Ontario, and that if you're going to get those jobs, you're likely going to get them near a Hamilton, near a Windsor, near a Toronto, near an Ottawa, near a Kingston, near a Thunder Bay—near a centre that's large enough to have a post-secondary institution that can support a level of knowledge-based employment.

While this may seem like a fairly straightforward piece of legislation—and it is—when you are moving to understand that we're a knowledge economy, this is absolutely integral to creating 20,000 new places for students in Ontario. This is absolutely critical to the Green Energy Act and the 60,000 jobs that are now well-developed and in play. I think we're almost halfway to that number already, just since the legislation has been passed. Certainly, I had a company phone me out of the blue that wants to move 100 jobs to Ontario because of the Green Energy Act. But the other reason—they said this to me—was because the quality of graduates and the quality of educational institutions in Ontario was second to none.

If you look at some of them, my friend from Guelph—we will all know that Guelph, arguably, has one of the best agricultural schools in the world and that it has now moved beyond that into biomaterials and into all kinds of things. Research out of Guelph is now driving the quality

of new bioinfrastructure, bioauto—the Ontario BioAuto Council in Guelph. The extraordinary innovation that's coming out of that is again attached to the quality of those institutions.

In my own constituency of Toronto Centre, there's a college that is doing a master's degree. They have said that they would love to see this legislation pass for the simple reason that the quality of a private college's master's degree—this is in organizational psychology, and it deals a lot with the stresses of a workplace because we are now working so much. The expertise at this college is quite extraordinary, and they are using graduates from OISE and from other public-sector-funded institutions.

One of the things they said when they came to see me was, "You can't get this legislation passed any faster?" And they had gotten, unfortunately, an email from one member of this House, whom I won't embarrass by name, misrepresenting this legislation-I don't think intentionally; maybe I'd better say representing their political point of view on it in a way that challenged the facts of the legislation. They wrote this person back and they copied me. They said, "Look, if this legislation isn't passed, if we cannot stand up internationally"—because they estimate that three quarters of the people who will come to Toronto to do this degree are not from Ontario, that over half of them will come from other parts of Canada and the other half will come from overseas because of the very specialized nature of this degree. "Being able to hold up this kind of certification process, we plan on including what the government standards are with our programs when we send them out so that we can tell people that we actually have honest, third party public sector verification of the quality of our degree." She said, "That's the difference between the profitability of my business"—and I don't think she should apologize for that, because she runs a very efficient college—"and the credibility and sustainability of that." She said, "You know, I haven't always voted Liberal, but I read Open Ontario and I read this commitment and I read the commitment to 20,000 places. For me, as a businesswoman, as someone who runs a post-secondary institution, who had in the past felt undervalued and underappreciated, I welcome this." She said, "You call me, Mr. Murray, any time anyone from a private educational institution challenges the government on the need for that, and I will take them to that, because I started this college 25 years ago from absolutely nothing, and I'm very proud of the reputation we built. But I simply cannot stand up because people expect me to say, 'My college's education standard'—and I've been very challenged internationally because of the number of people who don't maintain reasonable standards, and I can't point yet to a sufficiently aggressive and rigorous evaluation process that protects this."

Many people are welcoming it, and I would just ask members to talk to some of these people before any of us go on a campaign to suggest that somehow this is creating bureaucracy or a nanny state. I don't know anybody yet whom I've met, and I represent a lot of educational institutions in the centre of Toronto here, who hasn't called on the government to do something like this. This is very much a response. I think as we go to committee with this, we will hear very aggressively from these people.

We have an educational system in Ontario that every party has had a hand in, and it's a blessing. I would like to thank the members who have been here longer than me—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Questions and comments? There being no questions and comments, the member has up to two minutes to respond to—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): —no questions and comments.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, there's no response.

Interjection: If there are no questions, then there's no response.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Okay, no response. We'll move right along then. Further debate. *Interjection*.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Mr. Phillips has moved second reading of Bill 43. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye." All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the aves have it.

There will be a 30-minute bell. We'll call in the members.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I've received a deferral slip from Jeff Leal, chief government whip. It reads: "I request that the vote on Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002," by Minister Milloy, "be deferred until Tuesday, May 11, 2010."

Is it the pleasure of the House that this be deferred? Okay.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Orders of the day.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The Minister of Education has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

I declare that this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1649.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

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Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry	
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Chimeni, Doo (DiD)	Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
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Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	The state of the s
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby-Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / Thunder Bay-Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora-Rainy River	2000 ppellione du riord, des rimes et des rorets
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	1 opposition officiene
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	To the Desire to the second second
notwaii, Andrea (NDI)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham-Kent-Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West-Glanbrook / Niagara-	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
	Ouest-Glanbrook	Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges-Markham	T. S
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton-Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin-Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket-Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea-Gore-Malton	· ·
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean-Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga-Brampton South / Mississauga-Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity-Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)		Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	, and the same of
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa-Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)		Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
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Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East-Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est-Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training Colleges and Universities (Minister de la
		Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron-Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	S Alianes Illianes

Murro, Julia (PC) Murdoch, Bill (PC) Murdoch, Bill (PC) Murray, Glen R (L(B) Nayd, Yasir (L(B) Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Ottawa Centre / Président de l'Assemblée législative Chair of Cabinet / Président de l'Assemblée législa	Member and Party /	Constituency /	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB) Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB) Scarborough-Agincourt Scarborough-Aginco	, , , ,	Kitchener-Conestoga	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB) Scarborough—Agincourt Kninister Responsible for Seniors / Président du Conseil des ministres diégué aux Affaires opersonnes âgées Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires opersonnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint gouvernement gouvernement Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Prue, Michael (NDP) Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB) Beaches—East York Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economique et du Commerce Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernem en Intergouvernementales Minister of Intergovernmentales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre du Revenu First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premivice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée		Elgin-Middlesex-London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires or personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint gouvernement Prue, Michael (NDP) Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB) Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Ramal, Khalil (LIB) Ramal, Clab) Northumberland—Quinte West Ruprecht, Tony (LIB) Sandals, Liz (LIB) Guelph Sandals, Liz (LIB) Guelph Sandals, Liz (LIB) Sandils, Liz (LIB) Sandils, Liz (LIB) Suverpecht, Tony (LIB) Sandils, Liz (LIB) Suverpecht, Tony (LIB) Sandils, Liz (LIB) Suverpecht, Tony (LIB) Sandils, Liz (LIB) Surith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB) Nijsising Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Minister des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernem Sorbara, Greg (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Toronto—Danforth Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC) Simcoe—Grey Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premivice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée	Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	-	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
Prue, Michael (NDP) Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB) Beaches-East York Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB) Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest Windsor-Ouest Windsor-Ouest Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Eveloppement and Trade / Ministre du Eveloppement Services / Ministre du Revenu Minister of Government Services / Ministre du Revenu Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premivice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •		Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Prue, Michael (NDP) Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB) Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Ramal, Khalil (LIB) London-Fanshawe London-Fanshawe London-Fanshawe Ramsay, David (LIB) Northumberland-Quinte West Ruprecht, Tony (LIB) Sandals, Liz (LIB) Sandals, Liz (LIB) Savoline, Joyce (PC) Sergio, Mario (LIB) Nipissing Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernem Sorbara, Greg (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Toronto-Danforth Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB) Mississauga-Erindale Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC) Simcoe-Grey Wilson, Jim (PC) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Developpement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Developpement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Developpement économique et du Commerce Minister of Intergovernement économique et du Commerce Minister of Intergovernement Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernem Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC) Simcoe-Grey First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premivice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée			
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB) Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Developpement and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Developpement and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Developpement and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Developpement and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economic Developpement and Trade / Minister du Développement économique et du Commerce Minister of Economique et du Commerce Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Minister des Affaires intergou			Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches-East York	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB) Ramsay, David (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Rupecht, Tony (LIB) Sandals, Liz (LIB) Savoline, Joyce (PC) Sergio, Mario (LIB) Shurman, Peter (PC) Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB) Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Vimiskaming—Cochrane Northumberland—Quinte West Davenport Simcoe—Grey Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernem Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernement House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC) Simcoe—Grey First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premi vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée	Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Ramsay, David (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Ruprecht, Tony (LIB) Sandals, Liz (LIB) Savoline, Joyce (PC) Sergio, Mario (LIB) Shurman, Peter (PC) Thornhill Sorbara, Greg (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB) Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC) Wilson, Jim (PC) Lavelph Souvenport Guelph Swith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB) Winister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC) Simcoe-Grey First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premi vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée	Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Ruprecht, Tony (LIB) Sandals, Liz (LIB) Savoline, Joyce (PC) Sergio, Mario (LIB) Shurman, Peter (PC) Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB) Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilkinson, Jim (PC) Rurington Guelph Surlington Guelph Surlington Streling, Vork-Ouest Thornhill Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement Services / Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementales Wilkinson, Jim (PC) Simcoe—Grey Wilson, Jim (PC) Morister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Minister of Government Services / Ministre du Revenu First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premi vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée	Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London-Fanshawe	
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Sergio, Mario (LIB) Shurman, Peter (PC) Thornhill Nipissing Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint parti reconnu Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Toronto—Danforth Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilkinson, Jim (PC) Simcoe—Grey First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premivice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée	Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Shurman, Peter (PC) Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB) Nipissing Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint parti reconnu Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Toronto-Danforth Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilkon, Jim (PC) Simcoe-Grey First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premivice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée	Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
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intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement Sorbara, Greg (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB) Mississauga-Erindale Mississauga-Erindale Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC) Mississauga-Erindale Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premi vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée	Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC) Vaughan Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Carleton-Mississippi Mills Toronto-Danforth Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premi vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée	Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	intergouvernementales
Sousa, Charles (LIB) Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC) Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Carleton-Mississauga-Sud Carleton-Mississauga-Sud Carleton-Mississauga-Sud Carleton-Mississauga-Sud Carleton-Mississauga-Sud Carleton-Mississauga-Sud Carleton-Mississauga-Sud Carleton-Mississauga-Sud Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premi vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée			Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Carleton-Mississippi Mills Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Toronto-Danforth Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC) Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premi vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée	Sorbara, Greg (LIB)		
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Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC) Simcoe-Grey gouvernementaux Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premi vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée	Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC) Perth-Wellington Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premi vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée	Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga-Erindale	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Perth-Wellington Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premi vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée	Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
Wilson, Jim (PC) Simcoe-Grey First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premi vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée		Perth-Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
With The Last (DC) Vitabanar Waterlan		Simcoe-Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Wittner, Elizabeth (PC) Kitchenel - Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB) Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports		Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakabuski, John (PC) Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle	• /	•	**
Zimmer, David (LIB) Willowdale	Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey

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John O'Toole

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David Zimmer

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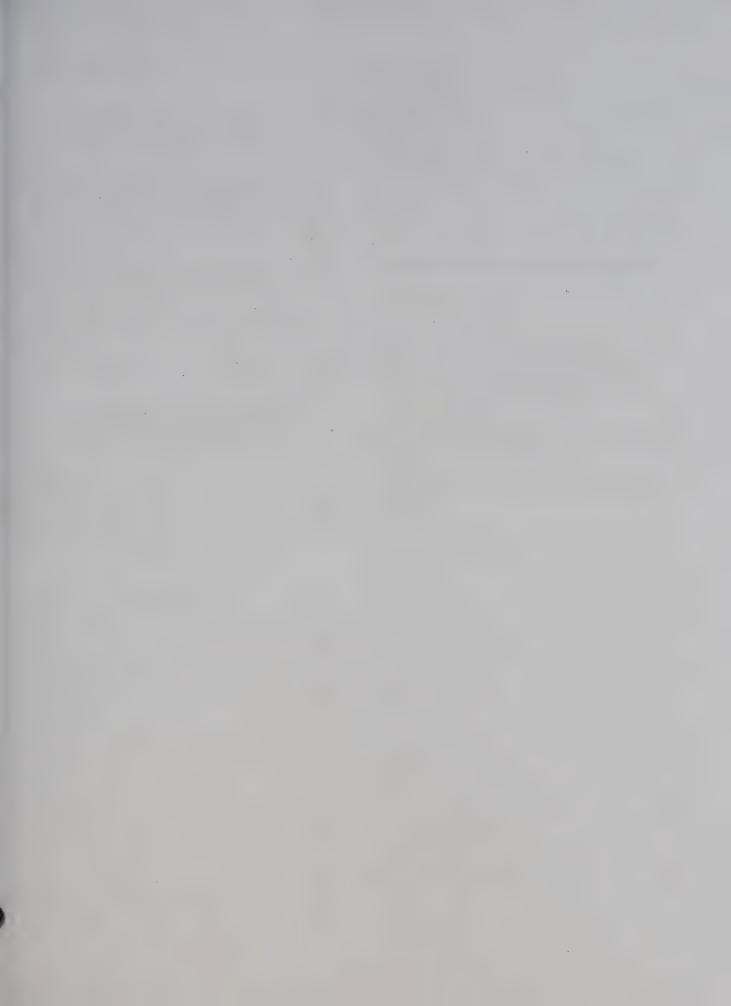
Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott

Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals Maria Van Bommel

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial





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No. 30



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Tuesday 11 May 2010

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 11 mai 2010



Speaker Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk Deborah Deller Président L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 11 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 11 mai 2010

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Jewish prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

EXCELLENT CARE FOR ALL ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR L'EXCELLENCE DES SOINS POUR TOUS

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 4, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 46, An Act respecting the care provided by health care organizations / Projet de loi 46, Loi relative aux soins fournis par les organismes de soins de santé.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate? M^{me} France Gélinas: It feels like it was a little while ago that I started the first 30 minutes of my lead, but I will pretend that everybody remembers exactly what I said and where I was at the time. For those of you whose memories are not right on, I'll do a brief summary of what I talked about.

We're talking about Bill 46, the Excellent Care for All Act, and I started by saying that one of the issues covered in the bill is executive compensation; executive compensation will now be linked to a performance-based model. But what people were asking for, fundamentally, was a way to curb executive compensation. Back then, I talked about the \$700,000 club that is made up of hospital executives in this province, and how this bill, although it talks about hospital executives, falls short when it comes down to setting a limit that people in Ontario feel is more reasonable.

I gave as an example our Premier, Mr. McGuinty, whose salary is \$208,000 a year, and who manages the budget of the province, which is close to \$100 billion, and then we have executives being paid \$700,000 and \$800,000, who manage a budget that is one one hundredth of Mr. McGuinty's. So certainly the need is there to make a conscious effort to look at executive compensation, and the bill does not address this. It brings forward a new mode of payment—part of the compensation will be based on targets that are met, quality etc.—but it certainly does not address the salient point, which is to curb executive compensation and the growth of it.

If you remember, I was talking about the executives, whose salaries were already very high, who were the only

ones who got a 7% increase last year, when I can't think of any other group of workers that did in 2009. That was the first part I talked about—I'm just trying to refresh everybody's memory.

The second thing that is addressed in the bill: The bill talks about the transparency and accountability initiatives. Certainly, this is something we support at face value. The more transparency and accountability in our health care system, health care providers and health care institutions, the better it will be for all. One of the main requests of people when they speak to accountability is the right to have their complaints heard. Most hospitals in Ontario have an excellent complaint department where, if you are not satisfied with the care you or your loved one has received, you go to a special department in the hospital and they look after you. They look after your complaint and follow through to make sure that a resolution comes to whatever has happened, whatever prompted you to bring this complaint forward.

I would say that it works well in hundreds of hospitals in Ontario; I was told that in some of them it does not work quite as well. But the main thing is that if this internal process fails, what people want is access to the Ombudsman. They want access to this independent third party who will investigate their complaints and bring them to a resolution. The bill does not allow that.

Right now, Ontario is the only province in Canada—the only one—that does not let its Ombudsman investigate complaints coming from its hospitals or other health care institutions. The Ombudsman has requested it, patient rights advocates have requested it, and here we have this Excellent Care for All Act that talks about the need for more accountability and we figure that Ombudsman oversight of our hospitals is finally coming. But it was not to be; it is not a part.

What they will develop is that they will make sure that what exists in most of our hospitals exists in all of our hospitals. To me this falls short, and it is an opportunity missed. The Ombudsman of Ontario already gets over 360 calls—people naturally call upon the Ombudsman to help them when the internal hospital process has failed them—but there's nothing he can do, because he does not have jurisdiction. This bill could, and I hope will, be amended to give the Ombudsman jurisdiction over hospitals.

Another piece of accountability that would go a long way to ensuring transparency and accountability for health care institutions, including our hospitals, would be the freedom-of-access-to-information legislation. I know that Ann Cavoukian, the Information and Privacy Com-

missioner of Ontario, will be releasing her report a few minutes from now. I hope she will continue to recommend that hospitals be covered under freedom of access to information.

Everybody understands that private health care information will never be made available, no matter that you are covered under freedom of access. That's not what we are talking about. We don't want to know the particulars of a person's personal life and of her health. What we want is access to what is going on in our hospitals. How is the money being spent? I'm not allowed to have information as simple as how much money was spent on consultants in my local hospital last year; nobody is allowed to have that information. Hospitals are not covered under freedom of access to information.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario made a presentation to the hospital association regarding this. She called it The Best Way Forward. The Ontario Hospital Association now sees that freedom of access is an enabler, not a barrier. We now have the association on board. We have our commissioner for information and privacy in Ontario who is on board and says that hospitals and other health care institutions should be covered under freedom of access to information, so that Ontarians have a right to know how the billions of dollars—we're talking \$42 billion for the health care system and close to \$20 billion for the hospital system alone. Ontarians should be allowed to know how this money is spent, and this is what freedom of access to information for our hospitals would do.

0910

Unfortunately, Bill 46, Excellent Care for All, talks about improving transparency and accountability but does not include freedom of access to information for hospitals. Here again, I hope we will see an amendment to this bill so that people who want to gain access to what is going on within those important pieces of the fabric of their community or community hospital will gain this access.

Certainly, I encourage everybody to look into the report that Ann Cavoukian, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, will be putting forward this morning. I know that her position is to make changes to the legislation so that hospitals are covered, and as of recently, the Ontario Hospital Association is also on board. They see that it is a good thing for Ontario and a good thing for hospitals; it brings accountability and transparency, and this will be something good. But here again, nobody is asking about looking into private health care files; we are looking at the running of our hospitals. That was the second topic that I had talked about that had to do with accountability and transparency.

Then I had an opportunity to talk about the interprofessional advisory committee that will be responsible for the continuous quality improvement process. There is a lot to be achieved through a good continuous quality improvement process. This is how best practices are developed. This is how we learn and share, and this is certainly something that the NDP supports. But this is

something that has been in place in our hospitals for a long time. I had given the example—25 years ago—I'm old. Some 20 years ago I was working at our local hospital and I was a member of our continuous quality improvement committee back then. This committee is still in place. This committee has done some good work and will continue to do some good work. Those committees exist in most of our hospitals in Ontario. They are a link, they share good practices and they learn from one another. Is this something good? Absolutely. Is this a powerful lever for change? Absolutely. Is this something that already exists? Absolutely. So I fail to see the difference that this bill will bring.

There is one piece where they talked about the Ontario Health Quality Council being given an expanded mandate so that they can make recommendations regarding quality and best practices. Here again, this is something that we promote and this is something that we are willing to support.

I talked a bit about the experience in primary care, where last year—no, the year before—the health quality council really focused on primary care and on putting forward some of the best practices that exist in primary care. One of the key recommendations—according to me, anyway—is their recommendation for an interdisciplinary care model for primary care to better enable primary care providers to provide top-quality care for chronic disease management. Chronic disease management is everything that has to do with diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, high cholesterol, and a list of—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I wonder if we could check to see if there is a quorum present.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask the Clerk to check.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): A quorum is present.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. A quorum is present. The member for Nickel Belt may continue.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I must say that it's a little sparsely populated in here this morning.

Interjections.

Mme France Gélinas: Can I continue?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Yes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm talking about continuous quality improvement and how this is certainly something that the NDP supports. This is how you develop best practices, but you also have to go a step further. Once best practices have been identified, it's not a one-off seminar that will make health care professionals change the way they practise. It has to be supported, it has to be implemented at the local level and it has to become part of the fabric of the health care institution.

Although we know the theory of it, I have yet to see in the bill anything that would lead me to believe that the levers will be in place in order for best practices to really show their full potential. Quality is a strong motivator. Everybody in the health care system wants to provide the best-quality care. The last thing you want is adverse consequences from the care that you provide. God knows that last year alone close to 24,000 Canadians died from adverse turns of events in our hospital system. We can do better than this. A way to do this is through continuous quality improvement. So although, as I said, the Ontario Health Quality Council had given out best practices in primary care, they talked about the need to have interdisciplinary team models of care to improve levels of care in primary care—all of the same ingredients as they are talking about in their bills already exist in other parts of the health care system but have yet to turn into levers for change.

To me, the part that is missing is the part where those best practices are communicated and—I would go past "share"; they are really encouraged by all of the care providers. I don't see this in the bill. So we could have the same thing that's happening now in primary care. We know that the best way to take on chronic disease is through interdisciplinary care. We have this family health teams model that is supposed to be the end-all of it all, but basically what we have with the family health teams is a whole bunch of physicians on an alternate payment plan with one or two what they call staff members—not exactly my idea of interdisciplinary care, where everybody works as part of a team and is a colleague.

If the family health teams were truly teams, then for the 10,000 or so physicians who have registered in this, you would see 60,000 other workers. We don't see this. There are more physicians than all other health care professionals put together. That's what I talked about when I talked about continuous quality improvement.

We had the health quality council do the research. They came out with the best practices; they were well documented; they even gave very good examples from Ontario. Did the government follow through and use quality as a lever for change? My answer to this is that it fell flat. There are some exceptions out there, and certainly I would say the community health centre model is an exception; and the aboriginal health access centres; and some of the community-based family health teams; and I would say our one and only practising nurse-practitioner-led clinic, which is something that I'm proud of.

By the way, this week is Nursing Week, Madam Speaker, so allow me to send some congratulations to the Sudbury nurse-practitioner-led clinic, which is presently expanding. They will be opening up a satellite site in the community of Lively soon. Their team is also expanding, where they will have a nutritionist and a social worker added to their team. To me, those are real interdisciplinary teams. People are colleagues; they work together; they work as a team to tackle the challenges of chronic disease management, which makes up the bulk of the work in primary care. So much more can be done. But here again the model that is being put forward is a model that is known, that is trusted, that has been tried before, but the government always falls short of using it as a lever to go to the next step where it becomes implement-

ed and where it becomes the norm. Here again there is nothing in the bill right now that leads me to believe that continuous quality improvement will be able to do the powerful work it is capable of doing—that is, motivating a culture change—because the bill falls short on some of the levers that are needed to go from an idea of clinical practice guidelines and best practices to actual care on the ground where people practise.

0920

The bill also talked about how it will make it mandatory for institutional health care providers to have a declaration of values. I agree wholly that nothing motivates an agency like a good set of values, a mission statement and a vision statement. This is your strategic goal. Everybody knows the direction that you want to go in if you have a good value system and a good mission statement. I would like to quote from the Sudbury Regional Hospital; their vision is, "Leading and innovating for excellence in patient care." The message is clear: They want to be leaders and they want to be innovators. We have a new CEO, Dr. Denis Roy, at the Sudbury Regional Hospital. He is certainly a leader and he certainly supports innovation and research. I could see that under his leadership and with the clear vision that they have given themselves, they will bring the hospital there. So I agree that vision is a powerful motivator for everybody who works within a health care agency.

They also have their mission, and anybody who goes on the Internet can see it. It goes as follows:

"As a regional hospital serving the residents of the city of Greater Sudbury and northeastern Ontario, we:

"—deliver high quality patient- and family-centred care, in both official languages;

"—provide reliable and timely access to care;

"—support the development of employees, medical staff, volunteers and students"—I may add that we now have medical students;

"—participate in research and the development and application of evidence-based practices; and

"—respond to changing needs and advocate for resources and services that promote health and wellness in the communities we serve."

This is their mission. It is posted on their website and throughout the hallways of the hospital. It is a strong motivator. So for the bill to say that they will regulate or legislate a set of values for each and every hospital—I say that hospitals already do this. Sudbury Regional Hospital is very good. It's a hospital that covers my riding. But the other 150 or so hospitals in Ontario are just as good. They have a vision statement. They have a mission statement.

I will now read the values from the Sudbury Regional Hospital. When I was talking about the mission, you noticed that the fourth point in the mission statement is "participate in research and the development and application of evidence-based practices." This is the link to their continuous quality improvement. This is the link to the best practices that they are trying to develop and implement into their hospital already as we speak and that

has been there for some time. Here again I want to make the link that although the goal of the government toward a cultural shift is good, some of the levers to get there are yet to be defined and are certainly not in the legislation that we see. But a lot of what they're talking about, the pillars of their reforms, are things that are already living proof. Sudbury Regional Hospital is certainly living proof that it is already taking place in our hospitals and other health care institutions here in Ontario.

I will go on with their values: compassionate care; our employees, medical staff, volunteers and students and their quality of work life; respect for diversity; teamwork, collaboration and partnerships; learning, research and professional development; wise use of our resources; accountability within an integrated regional system; a safe environment for our patients and all who work at Hôpital régional de Sudbury Regional Hospital; and open, honest and ethical communication and decision-making. That is the set of values that has been put together and agreed upon by the entire family that makes up Sudbury Regional Hospital, and they are values that they live with each and every day. Are they powerful? Absolutely. Do they serve as a motivator? Absolutely. Are they new and innovative? I would say, probably not.

Hospitals have been working with sets of values for many years. The boards of directors have spent many a meeting talking about what sets of values are needed. So it's a little bit hard to believe that in Bill 46, the Excellent Care for All Act, one of the pillars would be to develop values, when this is something that already exists, that has already done its work. I fail to see how it can do different work, given the length of time that it has been in place and given the success that it already has. If you want to motivate a cultural shift away from the volume-driven hospital system we have now toward a quality-based system, I'm all for the shift. But the pillars that you have identified fail to have the levers necessary to motivate that shift and motivate that change.

The bill also talks about a number of other things. One of the other things the bill talks about is patient-based funding. Patient-based funding is something that never sounds good to anybody who comes from a northern or rural area. If you're from remote Ontario, forget it; you should run away from this thing as fast as you can. Let's make it clear: The more concentrated care you do, the better you will be and the better the outcomes. There's no denying this. If you do 1,000 cataract surgeries every month, you will be very, very good at doing cataract surgeries. You will have excellent outcomes; you will have excellent best practices. Nobody denies that. But that comes at a cost. This concentration of resources to drive those volumes comes at a cost of access to care. In areas like northeastern Ontario, we will never have the types of volumes that downtown Toronto or downtown Ottawa will have. But that doesn't mean that we don't deserve equitable access to care. Patient-based funding is always a trade-off between developing centres of excellence that deliver good care with good outcomes to a mass of people, versus access to care.

0930

I want to give the example, one of many, that in Sudbury right now there is a long wait-list for hip and knee replacements, versus in Toronto where, within a maximum of four weeks, you can get a total hip replacement. What does that mean? It means that people in Sudbury who have the means—they can take the time off, they have the money to go to Toronto and pay for the hotel room, they have the physical strength to make the trip down—go down to Toronto and have the surgery done within four weeks. People who are too weak or too elderly, are in need of follow-up care or have higher needs don't go to Toronto. They stay in Sudbury and have very good-quality surgery done with good post-surgical care.

What does that do? It skews the population. The population that is mobile, high-level and high-functioning goes to Toronto and feeds a system of volume that provides very good care. Anybody who is not part of those big urban centres continues to provide very good care, but to a skewed population that is more frail, that needs more care, that needs more follow-up and that often has higher needs. So right off, you're not competing equally.

The patient-based funding model has an opportunity to deliver good-quality care with good outcomes, but it comes at a cost. I want to make sure that the balance is always there. The cost will be paid by decreased access for people who live in northern, remote and rural Ontario, and this has to be taken into account.

The Ontario Health Quality Council just did a 12-community tour of rural Ontario, where hundreds of people came and gave testimony about the decrease in access to care—often hospital care, but sometimes community care—and the devastating impact it has had on their communities. At this point, you're not talking quality outcomes; rural, northern and remote Ontario is able to deliver quality outcomes and care. What we're talking about is how this shift toward centralization of care is to the detriment of access to care in northern, rural and remote areas and also comes with an awful cost to those communities.

We hear things like their now having difficulty recruiting primary care and more difficulty recruiting physicians. We hear about outpatient physiotherapy services being cut back. We heard about an outpatient diabetes management centre being cut completely or curbed back. All of those have an impact on the fabric of a small community.

A hospital is part of the community. People invest themselves in it; it belongs to them. It is part of their community and part of the social fabric of who they are. They've invested; they've donated. In lots of communities you see that the volunteers are the ones who plant the flowers, who decorate the hospital, who do the volunteer work in the wards, who do all those extras that make hospital care, if you have to go to the hospital, that much more, if not enjoyable, at least tolerable.

But what are we doing? We are focusing on outcomes and big centres, to the detriment of rural Ontario, and I'm

very much afraid. Although the bill is very high-level when it talks about patient-based funding models and does say it will protect northern and rural areas, it doesn't say how, it doesn't say when and it doesn't give any details. I want to be on record that if you live in northern, rural or remote Ontario, this bill, with its patient-based funding model, has the potential to do more damage to the fabric of fural and northern Ontario because of the important role our hospitals play. I'm from the north, and hospitals are part of our community. I would say that they are often the heart of our community. And as their services get cut, as their opportunity to continue to offer high-quality services are curtailed, then the community suffers at all sorts of levels.

I wanted to talk a little bit about elder care, which is something that sometimes is labelled as alternate level of care in our hospitals. Certainly, for excellent care for all, this is something that this province has to address, and it has to address it swiftly and quickly. We all know that the population in Ontario is aging, and there is lots of good that comes with having our elders around and with having an aged population as part of our communities, to be there with us, to share their wisdom and just to share their company. But they often need a little bit of help to do that safely in their community, in their own home. If you don't do this, the possibility of elderly people ending up in trouble is very high. When they end up in trouble, the ultimate social safety net is always the emergency department of your local hospital.

I can give you an example in Sudbury. On Sunday, there were 28 people waiting at the Sudbury Regional Hospital in the emergency department. There were six cases that had to do with mental health that were looked after well, and out of the 22 left, 20 of them were over 80 years old. They were all people whose community-based services had failed them. If we continue to fail our seniors, if we don't provide good-quality senior care, they end up in the hospital. We end up medicalizing the aging

process, which is completely wrong.

Elderly people should be supported in their community, and the way to support them is not by high-tech medical care; it's by basic social support. It's to make sure that they have something to eat, somebody to clean the house, to shovel the driveway, to help them with their laundry, to check that they take their pills when they're supposed to-basic things that have very little to do with what hospitals can offer. But those people, when all else fails, get picked up by our safety net, end up in emergency, end up in our hospitals and, sadly, end up labelled as an alternate-level-of-care patient. An alternate-levelof-care patient does not get good care in the hospital. That's not what they need.

I don't believe that building more long-term-care homes is the way to go either. I believe in working upstream. I believe that we have to curb the number of seniors that end up in trouble in our hospitals. How do we do this? We do this by having a good home care sys-

Our home care system is broken. Since the competitive bidding process has been put into place, we have seen the deterioration of our home care. Because home care is not there to support people, with respect and dignity, in their own home, elderly people end up in trouble, they end up in emergency, they get admitted into our hospitals, and they become an alternate-level-of-care patient. We must do better than this.

This bill is called the Excellent Care for All Act. I hope it includes the elderly. I want excellent care for elderly Ontarians. They deserve nothing less. They don't need fancy and high-tech; they need to be supported in their communities. Here, again, what a great opportunity. I love the title: Excellent Care for All. One would think that that would include elderly Ontarians. They're part of this province. According to StatsCan, they are the fastest-

growing part of our community.

Why don't we set out to give them good care? Why don't we set out to bring back homemaking and to provide good-quality care, where the agencies that provide the care are able to recruit and retain a stable workforce? Because quality care comes by continuity of care, and that means continuity of caregiver. When you pay your workers 11 bucks an hour, you get 11 bucks an hour's worth of care. That means that as soon as your other parttime job—because all of the jobs in home care are parttime-which pays \$11.50 an hour calls you, you dump your shift in home care and you go to Walmart. Well, this is not a way to protect and provide good excellent care to our elders. The way to do this is really to invest into upfront care, give good-quality elder care, and support them in their communities, and then our hospital system will do better.

0940

I see that I only have a few seconds left. The Excellent Care for All Act is full of good ideas but short as to what will be the levers to get there, and also recycles a lot of what already exists, whether in continuous quality improvement, in best practices, in accountability, in transparency, or in description of values. They are pieces of the puzzle that will go toward excellent care for all, but the bill fails to give them levers that will allow us to go from nice clichés to actual care on the ground where the people will benefit, and hopefully excellent care for all will include the elderly population of Ontario. They deserve nothing less.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'd just like to add a few comments to the input by my colleague across the way from Nickel Belt. I just want to remind my colleague that all of us recognize that the system has to change, the system has to improve, and we all have to work together to do this and make this happen. I respect the comments of my colleague on the opposite side, because she has extensive experience in the health care field and I think she brings a lot of good input to this particular debate. But I just want to raise some statistical data with regard to some of her comments.

She mentioned that the Sudbury hospital has a lot of the things that are in the bill already being done. But I

want to clarify to her that the OHA suggests that less than 50% of the hospitals in Ontario have a formal declaration of patient values, and without that, the whole patient relations process also gets affected. So what this bill does is bring a uniform process across the entire province. It also makes the process very public, and when you make things open to the public, you will see improvements. Many of us will remember the wait-times strategy of the government. As soon as it was posted on the Internet, we started to see improvements in the system. So I believe this bill will certainly bring the same results as we move forward with this change to improve our health care system.

The OHA also suggests that approximately 30% of hospital CEOs have at-risk, variable-compensation contracts. This bill will make it across the province and hopefully improve things. So we're hoping —

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments and questions?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The member from Nickel Belt of course has a great deal of experience in this area, being a former nurse. Are you still a nurse or are you a former nurse?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I never was.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Oh, you never were.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Physiotherapist.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Sorry; I assumed she was a nurse. I know she had a lot of experience in the health care system and speaks to the bill from the point of view of a patient receiving that care, the care that they have received and the care that they might receive under this bill.

She raises a number of red flags concerning small northern hospitals and rural hospitals, as to where the quality of care will come from and how that quality of care will be delivered. I think it's a well-known fact, certainly in the medical community, that the hospitals that do the most volume, the operations that get the most volume and the doctors who do the most operations of a particular nature get the best results. Given those criteria, in theory it would be best to send all your patients to the areas that get the highest volumes; therefore, we would get the best patient results.

That may not be very practical, particularly when it comes to northern and small rural hospitals. That would gut much of their services and it would make them very difficult places to practise medicine. It would make it very difficult for them to recruit doctors and nurses and would not lead to better care overall in that particular area. So that's how the government is going to handle those situations when it comes to this bill.

There's much in this bill to applaud. As the speaker mentioned, the devil is in the details. It'll be interesting to see the regulations of this bill and how they take effect in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Certainly Ms. Gélinas, who is our member from Nickel Belt and our health critic, is one of

the pre-eminent defenders of health care and patient care in this province. It's always a delight to hear her speak, because she knows her subject matter so well.

A couple of the points that she made that I think are extremely important: Her bill, our bill as the New Democratic Party, to demand Ombudsman oversight of hospitals is critical. We're the only province in Canada that doesn't do that. There's no excuse for that. We have a good Ombudsman, and we need Ombudsman oversight.

Her point about making hospitals transparent in terms of freedom-of-information requests about expenses: That's a good point. That's absolutely essential. That should be in place. That should be in this bill.

Her point about access to home care for our elderly population is also excellent. Far, far too many people use the emergency room as their primary care stop. That certainly happens in my riding all the time. People who don't have access to a family physician—a lot of Ontarians, half a million or so, do not have access to a family physician. If they have something wrong, they go to the emergency room. This is ridiculous. This is an expensive way of delivering primary care. Certainly, it's not a place for our seniors, who, as she pointed out, simply need long-term assistance to be able to live healthfully at home. It's interesting when you look at European examples. My husband and I were in Sweden. They do health care very, very differently. There isn't the emphasis on the institutions. There is the emphasis on providing high-quality home care. It's cheaper; it's better; it's more humane. Again, all of these points are made by our member from Nickel Belt and our health critic. Hopefully, the government will listen and actually give this bill some teeth so it does what it purports to do in its title.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's a pleasure to comment on the member from Nickel Belt. As I was listening—obviously, she understands the system. I was delighted to hear the member talk about some of the things that have happened in a positive way. I would say that things have happened since 2003. For example, she spoke very highly of nurseled clinics. They do a great job. They are something that our government has certainly been very supportive of, that we're rolling out that weren't there before.

CHCs: I have a brand new CHC in my riding and one that's going to come online. I tell you, that's something that these communities have been awaiting for a long time. The one in Port Hope—the former government closed the hospital, they left them totally shut out, but we opened a CHC. The work that the CHC has undertaken in the last couple of years has been phenomenal.

Family health teams: The cluster of primary health care professionals that we've created since forming government is leading to those things that—I think we're making some headway. I was delighted to hear the member acknowledge those good things.

In the some seven years that I've been in this place on the government side, in every piece of legislation—it doesn't have to be health care—there are always comments from the opposition that we need to do better. I think we recognize that, but I think most people, even the OMA, has recognized that Bill 46 is the right step. We need to do more—absolutely—but recognizing the giant that health delivery is in this province is going to take some time, so I was delighted to hear her acknowledge those things. And yes, we need to do better; I do agree with her on that part.

0950

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Nickel Belt has two minutes to respond.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'll start by thanking the member from Scarborough–Rouge River, the member from Halton, my colleague from Parkdale–High Park and the member from Northumberland–Quinte West for their comments. The Excellent Care for All Act is something that is needed. It is something that puts the emphasis on quality, and I think quality has the potential to move and motivate a lot of change. I would have liked to see stronger levers in the bill to enact this change, but nevertheless, the focus on quality is certainly something that the New Democrats can support.

I'll take this opportunity, this being Nursing Week, to again echo the member from Northumberland—Quinte West that certainly the nurse practitioners' clinic in Sudbury, the first, is something to be proud of. It is a very innovative model, and they do really good work. I would say that people who have the opportunity to receive their care from nurse practitioners are always very satisfied and in awe. Nurse practitioners at the basis are nurses. They teach like a nurse; they communicate like a nurse; they are nurses, and people really appreciate the type of care that those health care professionals deliver. So, hats off to all of the nurses. Happy Nursing Week. Bonne semaine des infirmiers et infirmières. They are an important part.

I have a few seconds to say that the bill also makes it mandatory to have patient satisfaction. I have the 2008 patient satisfaction survey from the Sudbury Regional Hospital. It is something that, through their continuous quality improvement, they have been doing. It is a worthwhile tool and it motivates change.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My goodness, I'm surprised that the government isn't taking an opportunity to say a few words on this bill. You would think that, at the beginning of second reading, just after the leadoff statement, the government would really want to talk about the attributes of this bill. It's actually—coming from this government—not a bad bill. Of course, the devil may still be in the details. And as did the former speaker, I would also like to supply my congratulations and profound thanks to the nurses in this province who have made nursing a career and deliver so much of our health care system to the patient.

Having spent some time in a hospital last year with a hip replacement, I can attest first-hand to the fact that nurses in our health care system in this province certainly deliver the kind of health care that I think we all want and we feel that Ontarians should deserve. It's delivered by the nurses. The doctor does the operation but the nurses make your stay in the hospital as comfortable as it can be and deliver the kind of care, the TLC, that is so important in people recovering their health.

This bill has a wonderful title: Excellent Care for All Act. It's hard to argue against a bill that has "Excellent Care for All Act" as its title. This bill has three major objectives: The first is to change the funding model for health care organizations. Changing the health care model for health care organizations is a laudable goal but one which brings a few concerns. I think the government would be wise to be aware of some of the pitfalls that something like that may have, one of which is that if you're going to change the funding model for health care organizations, these organizations have to reinvent themselves. And whenever organizations reinvent themselves, particularly government organizations, the first thing they do is a study as to what they look like now, what they should look like in the future and how that transition will take place. Of course, that study may be done internally, but more and more we see from this government, as we saw in the eHealth scandal—where \$1 billion were spent on advisers and consultants who delivered very little. I think the government should be very much aware that those abuses can occur when changes are made.

I'm sure that the Courtyard corporation is reading everything that comes out concerning this bill and are putting their minds to how they can serve—in their minds, I'm sure they're serving—this transition and how that might improve their bottom line. Let's face it; that's what they're most concerned about: their bottom line.

I would suggest to the government that when we are changing the funding model for health care organizations, we be very much aware that the number of dollars that are dedicated to health care in this province are finite, and that those dollars that go to consultants come out of front-line health care workers. And the more dollars that come out of health care workers, the more the title of this bill, Excellent Care for All, is going to be held in ridicule.

We should, if the funding model for health care organizations is to change, make sure that the change is done in as effective and as efficient a form as can possibly happen. I can tell you that your track record is not good in this area, so I think it requires some additional focus in making sure that those things come to pass.

The second goal of this act is an increased emphasis on continuous quality improvement as a means of reducing costs and improving patient outcomes. Just a small aside: I'd like to see those two reversed. I'd like to see patient outcomes highlighted as being the most important thing in health care, and that, secondly, we control or reduce costs. The increasing emphasis on continuous quality improvement, from what I've read in this bill—the concern that I would have in that area is that continuous improvement seems to focus on the organization that is

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doing the delivery of care: a hospital; long-term-care beds; or a LHIN, a local health integration network. It does not seem to compare the costs of quality improvements between hospitals: Which hospital is doing this function in a more efficient manner, delivering better patient care and getting the patient out of the hospital quicker and in a healthier state? Which hospital is achieving that?

This point seems to focus on how this happens within a hospital, not how it happens between hospitals. I think the comparison between hospitals sets up the competitive nature of the human species, and I think that would drive patient care much better than the internal nature that seems to be the emphasis of this bill. I'm sure that, again, the devil is in the details. Let's see what the regulations say when it comes out. But I think that a comparison between hospitals would be a very important one to improving patient outcomes and patient results—leaving hospitals faster and healthier.

Thirdly, this bill focuses on evidence-based guidelines and best practices that health care organizations should adopt. Again, it's a laudable goal, and one which I only wish this government might have taken up much earlier. This whole bill is based on recommendations made in a report by the Ontario Hospital Association that was submitted to the government in 2004. That's six years ago.

These kinds of things have been introduced in England, Australia, other countries in Europe and some parts of the United States. In every single case, they have improved quality and reduced costs to varying degrees, depending on how they've been implemented, how it's been run and how much money is available to accomplish those goals.

We could have been six years down the road on this, but this government sat on that report from 2004 until 2010, until we finally have it in the form of a bill. That's a lost opportunity, I think. This government should have been a little more focused on improving quality of care in Ontario.

Let me say, first of all, that the PC caucus, under the leadership of Tim Hudak, is in full support of the concept of full transparency and accountability in health care. Again, those are laudable goals that this government espouses to support: transparency and accountability.

I would have to point out that your track record doesn't lend itself to a great deal of faith in those areas. Transparency and accountability: If we look at the eHealth scandal, it was one billion front-line dollars that didn't go to patient care, did go to consultants and delivered precious little when it came to the end results. That was not transparent; it was certainly not accountable.

Recently, we've seen a large number of consultants being paid—that we've been able to identify, anyway—somewhere in the order of \$200 million, being financed through LHINs to consultants, to find out how to do things better, supposedly. Those are all laudable goals.

But again, those are health care dollars that are coming off the front lines and going to consultants.

Health care dollars are finite. They're limited. The budget for health care is only this much: about 50 billion bucks, which is a fair chunk of change, but it is limited. To spend those precious dollars on questionable consultancies I think needs a careful look, especially given this government's record in that area.

Before having the same expectations—this government would like to have expectations of our health care organizations of delivering transparency and accountability—it would be reassuring to the people who are going to carry out these laudable goals in the health care system if this government got their own house in order and started practising some of that transparency and accountability that they are expecting of others.

A number of times we have requested information from this government and been turned down, only to get it through freedom of information, and found our worst fears: that things are not as they should be. If a government was truly transparent and accountable, those things would be available not only to the opposition but also to the public so that Ontarians know where their money is being spent. With this government's record over the last seven years, there are serious questions about how Ontarians' hard-earned tax dollars are being spent by this government.

We also agree with the underlying principles of the bill but would ask for full committee hearings so that we can understand how those principles will be translated into action and how the health care providers of this province will be asked to deliver on the Excellent Care for All Act.

If we look at the bill's summary, the health care organizations in Ontario—most of the general public, I think, thinks about public hospitals, but the other organizations would be long-term-care organizations and facilities, along with doctors' offices, along with distribution of medicines, drugs. Each of these organizations, under this bill, must establish quality committees which will report to its responsible body. The responsibilities of the quality committee include reporting on the overall quality of service, recommendations to improve quality, ensuring that best-practice information supported by available scientific evidence is translated into the distribution and monitoring of materials used in the health care organization, preparation of annual quality improvement plans, and/or other responsibilities provided for in the regulations.

That's a lot of red tape, I would say, and I don't see very much in there. I see a lot in there that is going to take up a lot of time of organizations. I see a lot of money going into the organizations in the form of consultancies, in the form of overtime pay, perhaps, or additional time spent in developing and providing this information. I guess it depends.

I would suggest that the patient is missing or is certainly not front and centre in that whole paragraph on what this bill purports to do. The patient's recovery, the quality of that recovery, and the speed of that recovery is what I would say would be paramount in this process. I would certainly like to see it emphasized more in the outline so that when it does come to fruition and take effect in our health care organizations, the patient is the one who is focused on.

One of the other tenets seems to be that they are going to collect information concerning the satisfaction of patients, caregivers, and employees with the services that they have been provided; again, a laudable term. I might suggest that not too much emphasis should be placed on that area. As I recovered from my hip operation, I was in the hospital for, I think, four days. I was well cared for. The nurses were all very nice. I was pleased to get out; I was pleased to walk out of the hospital. I was walking the morning after the operation. It was amazing how quickly they get you up. That's a statement, I think, on how talented the surgeons are. When they put you back together, you're in pretty good shape, and that's a talent that certainly has been emphasized and developed over the last 20 or 30 years.

But the patient's satisfaction is not necessarily a good measure. I think the patient's speed of recovery in comparison to other patients, his speed and quality of recovery in comparison to those within other organizations, other hospitals, and, if it's possible, to compare that speed of recovery and the quality of that recovery to other countries and other places where that same medical care is being provided, is the true measure of the quality of care that a patient receives.

I would have put my care down as "excellent" in almost every category, but I don't know whether the average patient in another hospital got out in three days, got out and was able to manoeuvre better than I could at the end of a week, or at the end of four days, when I did leave the hospital. I don't know that. I am not the best one to give a quantitative statement on how well I was performed on in that hospital. I was very satisfied, very happy. But that may not be the best way to measure a successful operation. So I would caution the government

on going down that road too far.

It also says that, "Every health care organization" hospital, doctor's office, perhaps, or long-term-care facility—must have a publicly available "patient relations process," so that a patient, if they feel something is wrongand most times when something is going wrong in the hospital, the patient is one of the first people who knows about it, or the patient's family. So I do think this one is very important, in that a patient must have access, when they are feeling that their recovery is not going as they would have expected, when their family or caregivers feel that they are not responding the way they should. Sometimes, if they're being well monitored by their family, if they're cognizant of what's going on around them, in many cases they are the first ones to know, and there should be some way for that to be translated to the medical staff. So I like this tenet of the program, that every health care organization must have a publicly available patient relations process.

Also, "Every health care organization" must have, within 12 months, a "patient declaration of values" developed in consultation with the public. Courtyard, are you listening? Every health care organization must have, within 12 months—there's a time limit on it. Boy, we haven't got time to do that; let's hire a consultant to do that for us. That just reads, "Consultants, let's go. Here you go; here are some bucks." I see consultants all over this one, and I'm sure Courtyard is listening. There are 150 or so hospitals in Ontario; there are 14 to 16 LHINs; I don't know how many long-term-care facilities there are in Ontario. They all need to have, within 12 months, a declaration of values developed in consultation with the public. Boy, that's a lot of work. That's a lot of consultants' fees. I'm not sure why they have to have that within 12 months, and I'm not sure what a patient declaration of values is, but the consultants will know that and they'll develop just a wonderful report for you. I don't know

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The time has expired.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I would just say that this House stands recessed until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have the distinct privilege of introducing, in the east members' gallery, Mr. Snehal Avashia of Ahmedabad in Gujarat, India, a consultant to the Gujarat pharmaceutical sector, representing Eris LifeSciences; and my good friend Mukund Purohit of Scarborough, president of the Ontario-based Gujarati Business Association and my host recently during a wonderful eight days in India, mostly in the state of Gujarat. They're visiting from Ahmedabad, a city of about the same population as New York City in the vibrant Indian state of Gujarat.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I'd like to introduce some guests, both on behalf of myself and the member from Ajax-Pickering, Joe Dickson: Shannon Corby and her son Andrew, of Ajax; Julie Gatley and her daughter Katherine, or Kate, from Claremont; Jillian Daffern and her daughter Katherine, or Katie, from Ajax; and my constituents from Pickering-Scarborough East, Claire van Dam and her daughter Alison, or Ali, both from Pickering.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to introduce the family of page Rhett Figliuzzi: Rhett's father, Rob Figliuzzi; his mother, Cheryl Figliuzzi; his brother, Quinton Figliuzzi; his sister, Haley Figliuzzi; and his grandparents Bruno and Diane Figliuzzi.

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: If I could, I just want to wish my dad a happy birthday. He's probably watching at home, and I just want to say: Happy birthday, Dad.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Visiting Queen's Park today from the riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London, I'd like to welcome to the Speaker's gallery Dan and Ann Marie Thompson and Dan Thompson Jr. Welcome to Queen's Park.

We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery senior staff members of the public relations department of the Parliament of Ghana: Miss Kate Addo and Mr. Prince Adu, and they are accompanied by the Consul General of the Republic of Ghana at Toronto, Mr. Kodjo Mawutor. Please join me in welcoming our guests to the Legislature today.

WILMA KWINTER

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd ask for the attention of the members. Last night, a good friend of all of us, Mrs. Wilma Kwinter, the wife of member Monte Kwinter, passed away. I'd like all members and our guests to please rise as we observe a moment of silence in memory of Wilma Kwinter.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

I would just say to the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, I'm very glad that everything worked out so well for your son and that it made for a great Mother's Day for your wife.

There being no further introductions, it is time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Premier, why did you say that the HST would be revenue-neutral for Ontario families when you knew all along that families would be paying more? Don't you think you owe an apology to taxpayers in Ontario for saying that now for some nine months?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think my honourable colleague knows full well that we've always talked about our package of tax reforms and how important it is to view this in a thoughtful, intelligent and comprehensive way. We're talking about a package of tax reforms.

More good news today: The Conference Board of Canada is reporting that the Ontario economy has emerged from the recession. It will sustain rapid, real GDP growth. We will lead Canadian provinces with growth this year of 3.8%, and next year 3.7%. They attribute a lot of the success to our tax reforms.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Member from Lanark. Member from Nepean.

Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Up until two weeks ago, the cornerstone of your pitch for your HST tax grab was "revenueneutral." You yourself, Premier, made that claim six times here in the House, and your cabinet ministers and caucus said it several times more. But you had a sudden change of heart and change of line last week when you finally admitted, and shocked your own caucus by admitting, that you knew all along that, "There will be an increase in taxation."

Premier, why did you do this for nine months? Why did you lead Ontario families down a certain path for nine months? Doesn't it say something about what has happened to the character of the Premier after six and a half years in office that you led people along on this untrue statement for nine months?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I think my honourable colleague knows that what we have been saying and once again, I simply want to acknowledge that moving ahead with this important public policy, moving ahead with this tax reform, would not have been possible without the support of the Conservative Party, and I want to thank them again. I want to thank Mr. Flaherty. I want to thank Ms. Ecker. I want to thank Mr. Baird. I want to thank Mr. Clement, I want to thank Mr. Harris, I want to thank Senator Runciman. I want to thank all those Conservatives who stand four-square behind this important policy initiative. They know what this means to Ontario families. More than anything else, it means jobs for them and jobs for their children in the future. That's why they stand behind it. Again, I thank the Conservative Party for standing in support of this initiative.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: You have to wonder what has happened to Dalton McGuinty after six and a half years in office. For some nine months, this Premier stood in the assembly and out in the general public and said that his HST was going to be revenue-neutral. And then finally, when confronted with the facts that we've been bringing across the floor for some nine months, the Premier finally admitted that his HST was going to be a tax grab on the backs of Ontario families. But, Premier, you knew this for some nine months. You knew this all along, and yet you continued to say things that you yourself knew were not in keeping with the facts.

I ask the Premier: Why should Ontario families respect the word of the Premier when he has no respect for the facts himself?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: With so much vigour, vitality, enthusiasm, and bravado, you would think that the party opposite would be firmly committed to rescinding this provision should they form the government. But they're not going to. They're not going to because they understand that they have this kind of provision in place in 140 other countries. They understand that our export-based companies here are operating in a highly competitive global economy with one hand tied behind their back. They understand that we've got to free up our

businesses and make them more competitive. We've got to put them in a position so that they can create—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order on both sides.

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: Before his moment of cleansing honesty, Dalton McGuinty was far from forthright when it came to his plans to increase taxes on Ontario families. Premier, I remind you that in 2003, you actually took an oath where you pledged, "I will not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters." And we now see, some six years later, Dalton McGuinty back to his old tricks, where for nine months you said that the HST would be revenue-neutral and then finally admitted that it's a tax grab on Ontario families.

Sir, you don't care about Ontario seniors. You don't care about Ontario families. You don't even care about the Ontario Liberal caucus. All you care about is Dalton McGuinty himself. Why should we believe a word you

say anymore?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I think we're going to have to turn the heat back down again. It was a lot cooler and calmer in here.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I've been reading some stories lately about—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Cambridge: I just sat down and you just opened up.

Mr. David Zimmer: Throw him out.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No. I can throw the member from Willowdale out, if he would like.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Perhaps it's understandable why members of the Conservative Party of Ontario are raising questions and expressing doubts: They are "confused," to quote them, about the position taken by their leader. They're wondering why, if they are so adamantly opposed to the HST-why are they not prepared to rescind that provision? I want to answer that question for them, and I want to answer it again. The fact of the matter is that this provision is supported by the Conservative Party. This would not have been possible without the support of Prime Minister Harper; Minister Flaherty; Minister Baird; Minister Clement; the former Minister of Finance, Janet Ecker; and the former leader of the party, Mike Harris. Together, we know that this is the right thing to do for our province. It's the right thing to do for our economy-

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: This speaks to what has happened to your character after six and a half years in office and the tarnish that you have brought to the office of the Premier in this great province.

Dalton McGuinty promised he'd close down the coal plants by 2007. You did no such thing. You promised to stop housing development on the Oak Ridges moraine. You did no such thing. You even broke your promise to parents of autistic children in the province of Ontario, and shame on you, Premier, for doing that. You promised to freeze hydro rates, and now they're going up some \$350 this coming year alone. The health tax is \$900 a year, and now your HST tax grab will take a big bite out of the pockets of Ontario families.

Why is it, Premier, that Ontario families pay the price for each and every one of your broken promises?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague says that he's concerned about the impact of costs on our families. If that's true, why does he oppose our new tax cut for Ontarians that took effect on January 1? Why does he oppose our efforts to reduce drug costs for Ontario families? Somewhere between two million and three million Ontario families pay for their drugs out of pocket. We want to reduce those costs by up to 50%. He opposes that. Why does he oppose our new Ontario sales tax credit of \$260 every year for every member of the family? That's going to benefit three million Ontarians. Why does he oppose our Ontario property tax credit of \$250 for non-seniors and \$625 for seniors? Again, three million Ontarians will benefit. Why is it that every time we move to reduce costs for Ontario families, they stand in the way of those efforts?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supple-

mentary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, here's your problem: Nobody believes you anymore. In 2003, you said you wouldn't raise taxes, and you raised them up to \$900 a year. In 2007, you tried to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Sorry. The members will please come to order.

Continue.

Mr. Tim Hudak: In 2007, you tried that trick again. And you brought in your HST sales tax grab. You didn't have to pay severance to the HST tax collectors. You knew you didn't, but you went ahead anyway. He claimed the HST would be revenue-neutral when, for nine months, this Premier knew that that wasn't true.

I'll ask you, Premier: Why do you keep saying one thing and doing another? Is it because you're addicted to taxes, or you just can't help yourself anymore?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to, once again, just seize this opportunity to thank the Conservatives for the support for the HST—

Interjections.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members will please come to order.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: As I was saying, I want to, once again, thank the Conservative party for their continued support for this initiative.

I want to thank the leader of the official opposition, who said, "To be clear, I believe that there's little sense in allowing two separate governments to apply two separate sets of taxes and policies and collect two separate groups of sales taxes."

Also, I want to thank him for the following statement, where he said, "The problem with the PST is it cascades, so every step along the way there's a tax on tax on tax, which raises the cost of goods and particularly punishes exporters. So we understand how [a harmonized sales tax] can help the economy."

I want to thank him above all for his unwavering commitment to keep the HST in place. I want to thank him for that, not only on behalf of our businesses but on behalf of our families, who are counting on us, together, to do everything that we can to strengthen this economy and create 600,000 more jobs.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Over the past 10 days, New Democrats have detailed the true cost to Ontario families of the McGuinty government's HST. The Premier has repeatedly questioned our numbers, but he refuses to release his government's own numbers. I want to give the Premier another chance. Will he finally get up in this House and tell Ontario families how much his government expects the HST to cost them?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We have the benefit today of yet another independent source that has reviewed our economic policies. I've spoken to my colleague in the past about the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which labelled their study Not a Tax Grab After All.

Today the Conference Board of Canada reports the following: Ontario households will also "benefit from income tax cuts and from temporary sales tax transition benefits as the province moves to harmonize the provincial sales tax system with the federal goods and services tax (GST) in July 2010."

This is yet another independent third party—another independent source—passing judgment on our tax reforms and saying that we are about to lead the country in terms of economic growth because of the policies that we have in place. It would be nice to have the honourable member's support for these kinds of initiatives that move Ontario to the front of the pack once again.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yesterday we revealed that the McGuinty government's HST on gasoline will cost families with kids \$232 a year—that's nearly \$900 million out of already stretched family budgets. Not long ago we released government documents showing that the HST on hydro and home heating will cost families \$225 a year. How big of a bite will the Premier's new tax on utilities take out of Ontario family budgets?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, we were very careful, in terms of putting forward these tax reforms, to ensure that we provided additional supports to our families. So in addition to the personal tax cut that took effect on January 1 of this year, we also have a new Ontario sales tax credit of \$260 every year for every member of the family, which will benefit three million Ontarians. We also have an Ontario property tax credit of \$250 for our non-seniors and \$625 for seniors, benefiting three million Ontarians. We also have a senior homeowners' property tax grant of \$500. We also have a new northern Ontario energy credit of \$200 per family. We have worked very hard to ensure that we take into account those needs and those concerns of our families in their homes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Since the Premier continues to stubbornly refuse to give Ontario families the real story on the HST, New Democrats will do it. Using Statistics Canada's economic model, we've run the numbers and have calculated the impact of the Premier's new tax on utilities on family budgets. The total: \$877 million, plus another \$900 million of gasoline tax. When was the Premier actually planning to tell Ontario families that his new tax on gasoline, on home heating and electricity combined, altogether is going to cost them almost \$1.8 billion a year?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'll ask the honourable member to forgive me, but I just bring a healthy dose of skepticism to the numbers that they choose to concoct here on a daily basis now. But I do have continuing confidence in independent third party sources. I have confidence in the University of Calgary and its assessment that our tax reforms will create 600,000 more jobs, and confidence in the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which said this is not a tax grab. I have confidence in today's Conference Board of Canada report that says our tax reforms will move us to the front of the pack when it comes to economic growth.

I would counsel my colleague to take a long, hard look at independent sources when it comes to understanding the impact of our policies on Ontario families.

PENSION REFORM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. This week marks an important milestone in the historic debate over the future of retirement incomes for the people of this province. Later today, this Legislature is going to debate an NDP motion calling for the creation of a public defined benefit pension plan that would provide workplace pensions to any Ontario worker who wants one. When the vote on our motion takes place this afternoon, will the government members be voting aye or nay?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: First of all, I want to acknowledge the positive, constructive efforts being

made by the New Democratic Party here in Ontario when it comes to this particular issue.

As I said before, this is a matter for debate, and

members will vote as they see fit.

I do bring a slightly different perspective to this particular issue. I think it's important that we keep our minds open not only to public solutions for this national challenge, but also to private sector solutions. Beyond that, I think we need to be open to a national response, which is why we continue to find ways to work with the federal government and other Premiers from around the country.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Later in the week, there's going to be another test of the McGuinty government's position on the future of retirement income for Ontarians. On Thursday, the insurance industry gets their say in the form of a private member's bill sponsored by the Liberal MPP from Peterborough. Some \$8.4 billion worth of fees are already being taken from the retirement savings of Canadians and put into the coffers of banks and insurance companies. The bill sponsored by the member from Peterborough would enable these same banks and insurance companies to pocket billions and billions more of retirees' money.

When the vote is recorded on Thursday on this blatant cash grab, how will the members of the McGuinty gov-

ernment be voting?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I also want to take the opportunity to thank the member from Peterborough for his positive contribution to important public policy debate.

I think it's unfair and simplistic to make the assumption that somehow the solution is going to be found exclusively within either the public realm or the private realm. I just don't think we enjoy the luxury of dividing up the world into black and white in that way. I think we've got to keep an open mind on these things, and I think what we're going to witness is an important debate here and, perhaps in some sense, a collision of ideas. But I think the ultimate beneficiaries will be the people of Ontario.

We look forward to both of these debates. We're going to keep an open mind, and we'll bring everything that we've learned to the national forum, where we think we can, working with the federal government, find a national solution.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Exactly: In a few weeks Canada's finance ministers will be gathering to decide upon the future of retirement savings in this country, and despite repeated attempts by New Democrats to get an answer, no one knows where the McGuinty government stands. With our Ontario retirement plan proposal that we put forward, we're on the side of public defined benefit pension plans. That's where New Democrats stand.

I'm going to ask the Premier one more time: With decision day looming, with this upcoming ministers'

conference, which side is he going to be on—on the side of banks and insurance companies, or on the side of Ontarians?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Public is not always best. I would gently remind my honourable colleague that they decided in government that public auto insurance was not the best approach, and they backed away from that.

To restate what I said a moment ago, there's an important debate that can, should and must take place, and we're going to witness some of that here in this Legislature. I think that's a good thing. We'll benefit from that, and that will better inform the representations we make on the national level, when we're working with the federal government and our counterparts from across the country.

There is surely one thing on which we can all agree: The status quo is not acceptable. There are going to be too many seniors in their retirement years who will have inadequate levels of support. Our shared responsibility is to find a solution, and we look forward to doing that.

1100

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, in leading off debate on the HST in November of last year, you denied that this was a tax grab, before adding, "The effect is revenue-neutral." But then Premier McGuinty admitted that the HST will be a major tax increase for Ontario families when it comes into force in just 51 days.

Did the Premier's about-face surprise you as much as his flip-flop on sex education caught Minister Pupatello

off guard?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The government's position has been clear and unequivocal that not only is this not revenue-neutral—in fact, even in the original documents we printed, when you look at the total tax relief package, the total tax relief package, including the proposed measures announced today, would reduce Ontario revenue by \$3.4 billion over the first four years, net of federal assistance of \$4.3 billion.

We put together a tax package that, again, the conference board today reaffirms will help drive job growth, will help drive increasing incomes and will help drive capital investment. It's the right policy for Ontario. We're delighted to have the support of the federal Conservative government on this.

It's time to move to a bigger and stronger economy. This policy will help us do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: The minister has already increased taxes on the corporate tax, small business tax and income tax, and now he's lowering them a little bit.

The Premier has a bad habit of hanging his ministers and caucus out to dry while they are defending a policy position that he has abandoned. He did it to Minister Pupatello and now he's doing it to you. He used to say that the HST is revenue-neutral. Now Premier McGuinty

admits that the HST will be a big tax increase for Ontarians. While you maintain the HST is revenue-neutral, the Premier admits that it will have a cost to Ontarians. He said that Ontarians should see tough economic measures like the HST as a kind of sacrifice.

Minister, did you know that the Premier was planning on contradicting you? Or were you just as surprised as the Minister of Economic Development and Trade?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Premier of Ontario has taken the tough decisions to create jobs, to create investment and to create growth in the Ontario economy. The only member who is inconsistent in this whole debate—and by the way, our corporate tax cuts will make us the most competitive tax jurisdiction in North America, according to their witness.

Let's talk about consistency. Why did that member say, on February 25, that you're in favour of those reductions for small business and corporate tax rates? You know they're the right steps to take. You know they will create jobs, just like Mr. Flaherty, just like Mr. Baird, just like Mr. Clement, just like Mr. Harper, just like Mr. Tory, just like the experts. This is about a stronger economy with more jobs for all Ontarians.

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

Mr. Peter Kormos: To the Premier: Why is Julian Fantino still the commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police even after the Attorney General's own lawyers say that Mr. Fantino is breaching section 113 of the Police Services Act?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Community Safety.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: First of all, let's correct what the member said. The Ontario government has not taken a position. The Ontario government would not take a position when a matter is before the courts.

Julian Fantino is still the commissioner because we have all the faith in the world in his ability to make operational decisions.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Kormos: This is a very serious matter. It's about public confidence in our police. Four lawyers from the Ministry of the Attorney General, one of them very senior, say that Mr. Fantino has violated section 113 of the Police Services Act. This is tantamount to an obstruction of justice. If Mr. Fantino doesn't have the decency to resign, why doesn't this government have the guts to just fire him?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Eglinton-Lawrence will withdraw the comment, please.

Mr. Mike Colle: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister? Hon. Rick Bartolucci: To the Attorney General. *Interjections*.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The member from Hamilton East and the member from Eglinton—Lawrence: If you have a disagreement, take it

outside this chamber. I don't need it interrupting the proceedings.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Attorney General?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The SIU is an independent agency. It acts independently of the government. It makes independent decisions. The lawyers advocating on its behalf, though employed by the government, are representing that independent agency. They take their instructions from them; they do not take their instructions from the government. I made that quite clear yesterday publicly. The member should know that.

When a matter is before the court, with the greatest of respect, some of the comments that he made are just not appropriate before our judicial system, which is the foundation of everything we do in here, reaches any conclusion whatsoever.

NURSES

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Yesterday was the start of Nursing Week here in Ontario, and my Willowdale constituents, indeed everyone in Ontario, are real fans and supporters of nurses. They really see them as the front line of health care here in Ontario.

Last year was a tough year with H1N1, and Ontario's nurses were there again on the front lines to help with vaccines and the various care that we needed for those flu symptoms.

We've invested a lot in nurses over the years in various programs to help graduates get the new jobs they deserve here in Ontario. Minister, what continuing investments are you making for the nursing profession here in Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member from Willowdale.

I'm very proud to be taking part in many nursing-related events this week—Nursing Week, internationally. Nurses are the backbone of our health care system, and that's why we have created over 10,700 new nursing positions since we took office; even this past year, 1,200 more nursing positions. We've invested over \$900 million in nursing initiatives since we were elected in 2003. We've also made Ontario one of the few jurisdictions in the world to guarantee a full-time job opportunity for new nursing graduates. More than 8,000 new nursing graduates have taken advantage of this program.

This morning I was at Sunnybrook, where we announced—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. David Zimmer: Minister, you talked about the expanding role of nurses here in Ontario. Many of us, and many of my constituents, want to find out more about this new nurse practitioners' program.

I know that the nurse practitioner-led clinics are part of the government's family-health-care-for-all strategy, which will improve access, and I understand that the nurse practitioner-led clinics will improve the quality of health care here in Ontario. But, Minister, can you give me a detailed progress report on the plan to expand nurse practitioner-led clinics in Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Yes, I'd be happy to do that, but first let me tell you what we did at Sunnybrook this morning. At Sunnybrook, we announced permanent funding for 34 registered nurse-surgical first assist pos-

itions. This is great news for nurses in Ontario.

Yesterday, we announced that the next wave of nurse practitioner-led clinics would be rolled out. We're accepting proposals until June 25. These nurse practitioner-led clinics—it will bring us to 25 in total—are providing excellent care. It's a very important innovation that our government has made to ensure that more Ontarians get access to primary health care.

Not only will the NP-led clinics increase access, but they will focus on chronic disease management, prevention, community-based health promotion activities—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Mr. John O'Toole: My question is to the Premier. Premier, there are just 51 days left until the HST grab of 8% more out of each family budget. The fact that the Premier wasn't straight about knowing that families will be paying more with the HST—it'll start on gas, home heating fuel, power—wasn't lost on Louis Desjardins of Belleville. Mr. Desjardins wonders what else you know but aren't telling, like that the HST really won't create more jobs. The member from Prince Edward—Hastings won't answer Louis Desjardins' questions so I will. When is the last time McGuinty was right about anything?

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank Bev Oda and Daryl Kramp, Conservative members in the federal House who voted for our tax reform package. I want to thank them and let them know how important that is. They agree with this side of the House that for a strong Canada, one must have a strong Ontario, an Ontario with plenty of jobs. Our tax reform package is all about modernizing our tax system. Now, I know there are people across the way who believe that there should be two governments taxing every transaction twice when once will do, but on this side of the House we know that to attract \$47 billion worth of 21st-century investment in our province, resulting in 591,000 21st-century jobs in our province, we have to reform our tax system. I want to thank Bev Oda and I want to thank Daryl Kramp—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Supplementary?

Mr. John O'Toole: If the Premier won't answer Mr. Desjardins' questions, how about Larry Maudsley of

Peterborough, who just recently retired and is living on a fixed income? He doesn't value the Premier's word any more that the Premier himself does. He says: "Any tax relief will not offset what people have to pay in additional taxes." Mr. Maudsley knows he will be paying more for heat, gas, power, Internet and a range of other things that you aren't telling us. The member from Peterborough won't speak up for Larry Maudsley, when the Premier knew for months that the HST would cut into the budgets of seniors and families in Ontario. Why did you only admit now that the HST is going to seriously attack seniors?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank Dean Del Mastro—Dean is the federal Conservative MP for Peterborough—for voting for this reform package at the federal House.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Member from Oxford. Member from Nepean. Member from Leeds.

Minister?

Hon. John Wilkinson: We're at a crossroads here. Now we can listen to the opposition and think that the status quo is acceptable, even though the world economy has changed, or we can take difficult but necessary decisions, because what people tell me and our government everywhere we go, and I think in your ridings as well, is, "We need more people working. We need people back to work." The Conference Board of Canada says that we're on the right track—those results are here—and though the prophets of doom and gloom over there are praying for some kind of a recession—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members will please come to order. Member from Hamilton East, member from Lanark.

New question.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. It is now clear that Toronto's transit vision will be dealt a devastating blow by the McGuinty government's cut of \$4 billion in Toronto's Transit City budget. The Metrolinx report to be released on May 19 will recommend that funded lines be dramatically shortened and completion dates be pushed back five to 10 years. Speaker, through you to the minister: What exactly does this government hope to accomplish by wilfully destroying Toronto's transit vision?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What we're attempting to accomplish is the development of a regional transit plan. We're attempting to put in place the vision for transit that was developed by Metrolinx, that was developed in conjunction with municipalities around the city of Toronto and with the co-operation of the city of Toronto. The city of Toronto and the mayor were part of the discussions leading up to the budget. Understanding that some of the plans needed to be scoped, they were part of that

conversation. Now we've had to delay the funding, as I've said many times in here, but Metrolinx is convinced we'll be able to, rather than completing the projects in eight years, complete them in 10 years. I think that's an absolutely reasonable change, and the people of Toronto want to see the projects go forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The NDP is the only party in this Legislature that supports the full completion of the funded Transit City lines according to its originally announced timetable. The NDP is the only party in this Legislature that stands with the residents of the Eglinton corridor, who have been waiting 20 years for a dedicated transit line. The NDP is the only party in this Legislature that stands with the residents of Jane-Finch and Rexdale in demanding that the Finch LRT be built according to the original timetable, so that commute times of two hours or more become a thing of the past. My question then for the transportation minister is this one: What does the government have against the residents of the Eglinton corridor, Jane-Finch and Rexdale communities?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The NDP is the only party in this House that has consistently opposed the building of transit in this city. The NDP is the only party in this House that has a member who has delayed and opposed one of the most important transit projects in this city, the Union-Pearson line. The member from Parkdale—High Park has consistently delayed, opposed and stirred up opposition to that line at every turn. We are committed to building transit in the GTHA; we are committed to getting these projects on line. It is unconscionable that this party that is supposed to be progressive and that is and supposed to be forward-thinking would not be supporting the building of transit in this city.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Mr. Bob Chiarelli: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, while experts predict the recession is turning around, I'm deeply concerned for students in this province who have trouble finding work during the summer break, which, as we know, helps them to pay for schooling and living expenses—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I've already reminded the member from Eglinton-Lawrence and the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek. Take it outside, both of you.

Please continue.

Mr. Bob Chiarelli: Minister, according to Statistics Canada, the unemployment rate of full-time Canadian students between the ages of 15 and 24 years was reported in 2009 to be over 18%. Minister, what are you doing to help students find employment this summer?

Hon. John Milloy: I appreciate the question. It comes at a timely moment. As students are leaving college and university for the summer break, they're looking for an opportunity to find summer employment that's going to

be relevant to developing their skills, create a source of income to support them this fall and also provide employees for many employers across the province. I'm very pleased that our government, recognizing that these are particularly challenging times for students, has stepped forward with over \$90 million to help summer students in the province of Ontario look for and acquire work. We're anticipating that about 107,000 students will benefit from a series of programs offered by the government. These include things like the summer jobs service. It's the largest component of the strategy, and it offers \$2 per hour for employers as an incentive to help them find students. We're also offering opportunities for those students who—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Bob Chiarelli: Minister, employment experts note that the transition between students graduating and landing a full-time job in their field is getting longer. In our post-recession world, it seems that recent graduates are finding that it takes longer to make the leap into their careers. Minister, what can we do for those students who are looking for a job opportunity that will help with their ongoing expenses and also with their professional development?

Hon. John Milloy: We certainly recognize that in this new economy it's important that students leave their education having a varied background of skills and experiences, some not directly related to their study. That's why we offer a wide range of supports to students. As I mentioned in my previous answer, we support students who are looking to start their own business. The government itself also offers opportunities where we hire students as part of the public service for the summer. We have programs like the Ontario Ranger program that's run by the Ministry of Natural Resources. Last year, the ministry provided close to \$1 million to fund 529 Ontario positions in the Ontario Ranger program. For the civil service proper, we have Ontario public service summer employment opportunities as well as the summer experience program—just a few of the ways that we're helping students in Ontario during these tough economic times-

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

1120

WASTE DIVERSION

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of the Environment: As we now know, your waste electronics and electrical equipment scheme has people paying full fees for a program only achieving one third of its diversion promise; two thirds of e-waste is going overseas to the highest bidder or to landfills. Is that what people are paying these taxes for? It's your program. Are you now prepared to accept responsibility for this abysmal failure, or will you continue pointing the finger at staff, pointing the finger at industry?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I know the program has had some challenges, but it also has had some successes:

17,000 tonnes of electronic waste is currently being diverted from landfill sites, and it is being properly recycled.

It's absolutely important that the electronic waste be kept out of landfill sites so that the sites aren't going to be contaminated and cause all sorts of problems for future generations. We're working with the WDO. We're working with the Ontario Electronic Stewardship council. We're going to solve this problem. We're going to be the most and best of anywhere in the country when it comes to recycling material in general.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Well, Minister, we know you're working on it; you've planned some meetings in the future. Very simply, too-little-too-late planned landfill bans don't cut it. Consumers have been paying this tax of between \$2 and \$26 an item to fund this program, and it's a failure. How much are we paying for all the other waste diversion programs?

Your government promised 60% diversion by 2008. It's now 2010, and we're only at 22%. Why would anyone believe you, as you seem to wrap yourself in the green flag and plan for the future, when you have such an abysmal past, an abysmal record, with respect to waste diversion?

Hon. John Gerretsen: You know, it's interesting: It's that party that brought in the Waste Diversion Act and it's that party that set up the funding system that is currently in place. We are making substantive changes to that to make the industries more responsible for the recycling. We are basically rewriting the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Oxford.

Minister.

Hon. John Gerretsen: It is your legislation that basically provided how these funds are to be collected. We know there's a problem with that, as has been shown over the last couple of days. That's why we're rewriting the act to make producers responsible for the waste that they in effect create.

We are going to get it right. That act didn't do it. The new act will be getting it right so that we can divert electronic waste, as well as other waste, from our landfill sites.

NURSES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Health. It's National Nursing Week, yet in communities like London, Hamilton, Sault Ste. Marie, Windsor, Toronto, Thunder Bay, Ottawa and elsewhere across Ontario a total of 2,045 nursing jobs have been cut. Front-line health care services have suffered as a result.

With the health of Ontarians at stake, will the Minister of Health commit to ensuring that not a single additional nursing position will be cut in the next year?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I welcome the opportunity to talk about National Nursing Week. It truly is a time to celebrate the extraordinary work that nurses do in our province.

I would recommend that the member opposite actually look a little bit deeper at the numbers that she's using. The College of Nurses is just one source of information; they will tell you that there are over 10,000 more nurses working today than there were when we took office. We have created, even in the past year, 1,200 new nursing positions across this province. We've invested \$900 million more since we were elected so that we can hire more nurses and we can also expand the scope of practice for nurses. This morning—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Sault Ste. Marie has been hit particularly hard, with nearly two dozen nursing positions eliminated. Patients are forced to go without thousands and thousands of hours of direct care. The Sault Area Hospital has to make reductions in oncology, critical care, primary care, coronary care, surgery and the intensive care unit.

Patients and nurses in Sault Ste. Marie want a guarantee from the McGuinty government that the senseless cuts to their local health care will come to an end once and for all. Will the minister use this opportunity of National Nursing Week to deliver this guarantee to the good people of Sault Ste. Marie?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: What I can tell the people of Sault Ste. Marie and right across this province is that we're working very hard to improve the quality of health

care and to improve access to health care.

Nurses are the backbone of our health care system. We rely on them very heavily to provide that patient-centred care that we are determined to provide across this province.

In Sault Ste. Marie, I'm sure the member opposite would be interested to know, there are 29 nursing positions posted at the Sault Area Hospital right now. Across the province, there are almost 400 nursing positions that are being advertised.

Nursing is a wonderful career for people, and it is just getting better in the province of Ontario.

TAXATION

Mr. Glen R. Murray: To the Minister of Revenue: As Ontario leads Canada out of the global recession with 3.8% GDP growth, understandably job creation for those able to work is a major focus of our government. Laying the conditions for the creation of good jobs is one of the most important things our government can do.

Not everybody will be able to get back to work overnight. Those still waiting for work have real concerns surrounding the effects of the HST on a limited income. My constituents want to know if the HST will place an additional burden on low-income Ontarians, forcing them to pay more when they can least afford it.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank the member for the question, because it goes to the heart of tax reform

We are changing our sales tax in this province on July 1, but we're also reforming our income tax system. Part of that has already started. We now have the lowest personal income tax rate of any province in Canada when it comes to the first \$37,000 worth of income.

On July 1, we're taking other measures. The first one has to do with what we refer to as the HST rebate. People of modest means receive today the GST rebate from the federal government, some \$240 for adults and \$140 for children. That will be maintained by the federal government. We are adding a new HST rebate of some \$260 for every adult and child in the family. That's very important for people to understand. It's also why we're expanding the property tax credit, both for people who own a home and also for people who rent.

I know that in your riding it is so important—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Helping getting people back to work is the number one thing we can do to help low-income Ontarians who are able to work. Income tax exemption, tax credits and traditional cheques will help struggling families as we move forward with a new form of taxation. Exemptions include children's clothing and footwear, all infant and child car seats, diapers, books, meals under \$4, newspapers and feminine hygiene products.

Minister, because of their importance to families, many social advocates have endorsed these exemptions. What reaction are you getting from these groups to the HST and our government tax reforms?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I think it's important, in this somewhat partisan forum that we have here, to talk to people who are independent of this place. And what are they saving?

"In terms of the net impact of the sales tax harmonization, we think that overall it will actually improve the incomes of low-income Ontarians for the most part." That's Michael Oliphant, the director of research and communications for the Daily Bread Food Bank.

Another quote: "This budget has moved the bar forward on housing, tax credits, and child benefits in ways that will make a tangible difference in the lives of many Ontarians." That's Pat Capponi of the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction.

Another quote: "When you start to think about an extra \$42 per month per child and start to look at the one-time money coming back and the permanency of the tax credit, the harmonization tax credit, this will make some tangible difference—an extra \$100 in these folks' pockets is the difference between going to food banks and not going to food banks." That's Gail Nyberg—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

1130

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Last week, 11 children's aid societies took an unprecedented step: filing for a judicial review of your section 14 process. They feel that the section 14 process was flawed and the outcome was predetermined.

I know you will not comment on the specifics of this case, but will the minister tell the House the last time that a funding partner had to ask for a judicial review just because they didn't believe the process was fair?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to have a chance to speak in this House about the judicial review, which is a procedural tool available to any CAS in the province. It's an arm's-length review that will follow a section 14 application.

Although I cannot speak to the specifics of what's transpiring, I can say that in the context of the section 14 review that was undertaken by my ministry, some \$850,000 flowed to children's aid societies across the province. That's on top of the \$26.9 million in additional dollars that was put into the sector this past spring.

We're in the midst of a large-scale conversation about the future of children's aid societies and that delivery model. At the same time, we continue to meet our commitment never to put Ontario's children at risk.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Here's what's actually happening out there. Last year, Durham Children's Aid Society investigated 4,180 reports of abuse. It served 5,397 families and facilitated 6,787 visits in the family access centre. They've eliminated 31 positions and still have a funding shortfall of \$3.8 million.

Minister, you have to admit that something here doesn't really add up. Will you admit that the section 14 process undertaken by your ministry, just like your consultation process with the pharmacies, was a fait accompli?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm so pleased to have a chance to talk about Durham region and let this Legislature know how much better the kids are in Durham region today than they were in the past.

Funding has increased for children's aid in Durham by 31% since 2003, and over the last decade, funding is up over 250%. Section 14 money that was provided to Durham is \$142,000, and stabilization funding is \$543,000. At the same time, we've increased funding to child care in Durham by 71% since 2003. We've put \$63.5 million into child care, and that's saving 300 subsidized spaces in your community. Twenty Durham schools will have all-day JK for four- and five-year-olds, servicing—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

PUBLIC SAFETY

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels. On Friday night, a chimney collapsed at the Vale Inco smelter complex in Copper Cliff. The chimney fell and damaged a pressurized line that came from the oxygen plant. People in Copper Cliff are scared. They know the oxygen plant is a highly technical and dangerous industrial operation. We were all lucky last Friday that the oxygen line had just been turned off.

It is the minister's responsibility to ensure public safety. What are you doing to ensure the safety of the residents of Copper Cliff in Sudbury?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I want to thank the member for the question. I do understand that this incident did take place. There were no injuries, and there was no potential harm to any workers.

Two Ministry of Labour inspectors have been on the site. These inspectors have expertise both in mining and in construction. They're currently conducting an investigation into the incident, and they're making sure that the worksite is safe going forward.

That being said, our government is committed to ensuring that all workers are protected from hazards on the job site. That's what our inspectors are doing every single day out there in all workplaces across Ontario.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Last December, I wrote to the minister and I explained to him that the people are concerned for their safety because Vale Inco has resumed operations with replacement workers.

The minister may not know, but in 1995 there was a sulphur trioxide leak from the acid plant that led to the evacuation of hundreds of people who had to be treated in our hospital. It overwhelmed our system. If the minister didn't know, the people in Copper Cliff know.

Replacement workers tear at the social fabric of our community. In an industrial site, they also bring a level of insecurity to the residents of the neighbourhood. When will the government act and ban replacement workers?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: The member did write to me, and I personally spoke with the member to address her concerns around the safety of the workers. Again, our government is committed to ensuring that all workers are protected from injuries and major health hazards on the job.

What I can say is that the Ministry of Labour has met with officials from the company and the union to discuss the company's plans as they operate. The ministry officials explained the company's responsibility, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, to ensure that all workers—all workers—there who are doing any work are adequately trained and qualified. We continue to enforce our Occupational Health and Safety Act by conducting proactive inspections at Vale and other mine locations.

We're also front and centre when responding to complaints from any party, I say to the member. But I continue to address her concerns and speak personally with her.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Dave Levac: My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Minister, I know that there are aboriginal people trying to build vibrant and stable communities throughout this province. There are some disparities in the quality of life between aboriginal people and non-aboriginal people in this country, let alone this province. Aboriginal people living on- and off-territory can face a number of unique issues that may influence their lives in Ontario and, indeed, across Canada.

Can the minister please tell the House what initiatives his ministry is taking to best improve the lives of aboriginal people here in Ontario and across Canada?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member for Brant has been very involved in these issues. What we're trying to do is provide economic incentives and opportunities so that those on First Nations territories can have the opportunities that many of us take for granted.

Not long ago, the member from Brant, the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, and I attended a signing ceremony between Samsung and Six Nations. This signing ceremony, made possible by the Green Energy Act, will provide not only green energy development on Six Nations territories but, most importantly, it will provide jobs for Six Nations residents. It's one of the many signings that have taken place under this world-leading green energy accord.

Now you say, "Who's going to take the jobs?" Well, we've been working with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to make sure that we have the appropriate training and related support so that Six Nations and other aboriginal residents can take advantage of these job opportunities—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Dave Levac: Minister, thank you for leading that into the next question I have, which is on education and contrary to what some people believe to be the truth. Some aboriginal students face a number of unique cultural, social and economic challenges in their lives throughout the educational field. The combination of these is sometimes very overwhelming, especially when pursuing post-secondary education. Contrary to the misinformation out there, aboriginal students may not always have the financial assistance or unique community support when pursuing post-secondary education.

Can the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs tell us what this government is doing to help create the climate for success for aboriginal students not only to succeed and to thrive in their post-secondary education, but also to help build their communities as they've always wanted to do from time infinitum?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Once again, the member from Brant has been a leading advocate for opportunities for people throughout his riding and in First Nations communities.

In the last budget, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities has been given the opportunity to offer

20,000 more post-secondary spaces to students throughout the province of Ontario. That's the start, particularly for the educational institutes in my colleague's riding: Nipissing, Laurier and Mohawk.

But we've done more than that. I attended a ceremony with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities about a \$26.4-million fund that will particularly assist aboriginal students to obtain the educational supports they require and the related cultural and educational assists on campus. And of course, we have the best student assistance program anywhere in Canada so that those who need financial assistance—aboriginal students and others—will get the financial assistance they require to attend the place and get the post-secondary education they require in the province of Ontario.

1140

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Kormos: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: This is pursuant to standing order 39 and with respect to a petition presented to this chamber yesterday by the member for Eglinton-Lawrence.

First, if I may refer to our friends Bosc and O'Brien, page 1159: "While the right of the citizens to petition Parliament for redress of grievances is frequently referred to as a fundamental, or as a fundamental constitutional principle, the written constitution is in fact silent on the matter. The recognition of this right is, however, well entrenched, based as it is on centuries-old tradition and established precedent." Why I make reference to that is because it's the right of the citizen. It's not the right of any MPP to petition; it's the right of the citizen to petition.

I then go to page 1170, Bosc and O'Brien again, which discusses the role of the MPP. While no MPP is obliged to present a petition and doesn't necessarily have to agree with the petition to present it, most MPPs or MPs consider it their duty.

I know that it's unparliamentary to misrepresent something to this House, and similarly unparliamentary to allege that a member made a misrepresentation, but the petition that was presented yesterday, the prayer in the petition, read, "We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the building of the Eglinton rapid transit line as soon as possible, and to say no to gridlock on Eglinton." End of prayer. The member for Eglinton-Lawrence—and I have the Hansard for you, sir, if a page would like to come here and deliver it to the table. Speaker, you'll see that the presenter of the petition, when presenting the petition, inserted an addendum to the prayer in the petition. The addendum is clearly designed to generate some political spin. It may well have been a careless guip on the part of the member for Eglinton-Lawrence. However, the addition of that addendum completely distorts the prayer in the petition, which calls upon the Legislative Assembly to get on with its public transit construction, and indeed constitutes an attack on the mayor of the city of Toronto, who's not referred to at all by the petitioners.

Standing order 39 prescribes the process for presenting petitions. Look, I know there are all sorts of things people do in the House from time to time, witticisms that are injected, but this is a citizens' right, and we're doing a disservice to the citizens who expect us to present their petitions when we alter them, when we add to them or when we belittle that prayer in the petition by turning into a joke or turning it into a partisan political comment.

I don't intend and have no interest in bringing a motion for censure or a motion for contempt, but I do—

Mr. Mike Colle: Give me a break.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Mr. Peter Kormos: —but I do understand that those motions are appropriate because they're the only motions in which one can refer to a member as having committed an unparliamentary deed. I have no interest in doing that, but I am asking the Speaker to use his authority to (1) address the concern that I've raised and (2) to assist us in ensuring that we perform this very important duty to the citizens of Ontario. That's one of our duties. Bosc and O'Brien talk about the MPP's duty to read the petition and the citizens' right to make the petition. I'd ask the Speaker to rule on that, please.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Government House leader.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Under standing order 39(b), "A member may present a petition in the House during the routine proceeding 'Petitions.' The member may make a brief statement summarizing the contents of the petition and indicating the number of signatures"—

Interjection.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Perhaps the member would like to let me finish my statement. If in fact the member for Eglinton-Lawrence made a statement that was inappropriate in his summarizing of the petition, then I'm sure the member will be apologizing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We should get on with our business.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I do agree with the issues raised in the point of order by my colleague from the third party. For the member to imply in his reading—the Hansard would imply that his statement was part of the petition, which in fact it is not. I believe that the standing orders do not allow for—the petition must be read as presented to the House, and I do believe that the member for Welland and my colleague from the third party has raised a substantive and genuine bona fide point of order on this issue, and we would ask you to rule on that as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I want to thank the member from Welland, and the government House leader and the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for their comments on the point of order raised by the honourable member. I thank the honourable member for his point of order.

As all members know, the Speaker has been struggling with the issue of petitions on a number of fronts because

I do not have a copy of the petitions physically in front of me when they are presented to the House; they are

approved by the table.

I want to just clarify some remarks, because it's important for the members to know that there are actually two options that are available to them when they are presenting petitions. They can stand up and read the petition as it's presented or, pursuant to standing order 39(b), they can make a brief statement summarizing the contents. I've said before, and I'm going to say again, that politicizing the petitions is not helpful to the procedures of this House, and again would remind all members and ask of them to refrain from doing so. I say that to members on both sides of the House. The honourable member is correct that the members are to present petitions on behalf of those citizens who submit them.

To address the issue that the government House leader raised, the point in the standing orders regarding debate is during the time of petitions, and during the time of petitions it's not to be used as an opportunity to engage in debate or put forward a member's own opinion.

I thank the honourable member for raising it and would remind all members to either read the petition as it is presented or present a brief summary, or they can table

the petition as well.

DEFERRED VOTES

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'ENSEIGNEMENT POSTSECONDAIRE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 favorisant le choix et l'excellence au niveau postsecondaire, la Loi de 2005 sur les collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel et la Loi de 2002 sur l'École d'art et de design de l'Ontario.

The division bells rang from 1148 to 1153.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia Albanese, Laura Arthurs, Wayne Balkissoon, Bas Bartolucci, Rick Bentley, Christopher Best, Margarett Bisson, Gilles Bradley, James J. Broten, Laurel C. Duncan, Dwight Flynn, Kevin Daniel Fonseca, Peter Gerretsen, John Gélinas, France Gravelle, Michael Hampton, Howard Hoskins, Eric Hoy, Pat Jaczek, Helena Milloy, John Mitchell, Carol Moridi, Reza Murray, Glen R. Naqvi, Yasir Orazietti, David Pendergast, Leeanna Phillips, Gerry Prue, Michael Qaadri, Shafiq Brown, Michael A. Brownell, Jim Cansfield, Donna H. Caplan, David Carroll, Aileen Chan, Michael Chiarelli, Bob Colle, Mike Crozier, Bruce Delaney, Bob DiNovo, Cheri Dombrowsky, Leona Duguid, Brad Jeffrey, Linda Johnson, Rick Kormos, Peter Lalonde, Jean-Marc Leal, Jeff Levac, Dave Mangat, Amrit Marchese, Rosario Matthews, Deborah Mauro, Bill McMeekin, Ted McNeely, Phil Meilleur, Madeleine

Ramal, Khalil Ramsay, David Rinaldi, Lou Ruprecht, Tony Sandals, Liz Smith, Monique Sousa, Charles Tabuns, Peter Takhar, Harinder S. Van Bommel, Maria Wilkinson, John Wynne, Kathleen O. Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Navs

Arnott, Ted Barrett, Toby Chudleigh, Ted Clark, Steve Dunlop, Garfield Hardeman, Ernie Hudak, Tim Jones, Sylvia MacLeod, Lisa Martiniuk, Gerry Miller, Norm Munro, Julia

Murdoch, Bill O'Toole, John Ouellette, Jerry J. Shurman, Peter Witmer, Elizabeth Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 69; the nays are 18.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Minister?

Hon. John Milloy: I'd ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): So ordered.

There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1157 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. John O'Toole: On behalf of the member from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington and myself, I'd like to welcome to the visitors' gallery Mr. Burt Werry. He's a member of the Werry family, an outstanding agricultural business family in the riding of Durham and perhaps in other parts than just my riding. They're one of the best cattle-dealing families that I've had the occasion to listen to and work with, a highly ethical and disciplined family. I congratulate them and welcome them today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to congratulate McDonald's restaurants on their McHappy Day fundraiser held on May 5, last week. This is the day when a dollar from every breakfast McMuffin sandwich, Big Mac and Happy Meal is donated to Toronto's new Ronald McDonald House. It was my privilege to join my

community leaders alongside the McDonald's crew in Port Perry in this tradition last week.

Many thanks to my constituents Ginger and Sandy Jackson as well as their sons Stephen, James, Jeff and Tim, who own the McDonald's restaurants in Uxbridge and in Port Perry. Ginger Jackson is a member of the Mayor's Honour Roll for the community service she provides and is a highly regarded person in the community.

I appreciate the hospitality of the Jacksons and their staff. Best of all, the event raised over \$5,000 for Ronald McDonald House. Thanks to everyone who participated and for their support for a very worthy cause—Ronald McDonald House in Toronto.

DAKOTA BRANT

Mr. Dave Levac: I'm honoured to announce to the members and all Ontarians that Dakota Brant, a member of the Mohawk Turtle Clan from Six Nations of the Grand River Territory in the riding of Brant, recently won the 2010 Miss Indian World competition. The pageant was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and took place this year on April 24.

The contest is part of the annual Gathering of Nations powwow, North America's largest powwow. Twenty-six Native American and indigenous women representing their different tribes and traditions competed in the Miss Indian World competition in the areas of tribal knowledge, dancing ability and personality assets. By winning this major competition, Dakota will represent all native and indigenous people as a cultural goodwill ambassador worldwide.

Dakota will be graduating this year on the president's honour roll of Trent University, where she majored in indigenous environmental studies, and she aims one day to pursue a Ph.D. in this field. Dakota is an active leader in her community and one of the youngest teachers of the Mohawk language.

I'm so proud to say that not only is she the first Mohawk woman to be crowned Miss Indian World, she is also a great role model for her community, the children in it and the world at large. Congratulations, Dakota. We're proud of you. Nya:weh.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Bill Murdoch: After years of lobbying the provincial government, I'm pleased the minister has finally listened and agreed to give the 70-kilometre-long stretch of Highway 6 between Mar and Tobermory its overdue facelift. The Highway 6 rehabilitation will include a half-metre partial paved shoulder and provide a smoother ride for drivers.

But the minister has not been clear on why she abandoned the proposal to add bike lanes to this \$20-million project. The people of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound have been told that the Ministry of Transportation is committed to encouraging active forms of transportation

like cycling, but no such commitment was delivered on March 31.

As you know, the Bruce Peninsula is a major ecotourism destination, thanks to the well-developed Bruce Trail and the national and provincial parks. Canoes, hiking boots and bicycles are a must for visitors to the peninsula.

We're talking about lost tourist dollars. We're also talking about dangerous traffic conditions, as there is a variety of users of this road. We are seeing more touring bicycles sharing the road with cars and large trailers. There are identified safety and operational concerns.

For this reason, I would like to remind the minister that bike lanes can add to the durability and lifetime of rural and northern roads and, more importantly, they can add to your life expectancy.

So I'd like to ask the minister to reconsider her objectives for Highway 6. It has taken many years of lobbying to get the construction season going on the Bruce Peninsula. I hope it doesn't take as long to receive cycling lanes. Bruce Peninsula is waiting.

SCIENCE FAIR

Mrs. Liz Sandals: It's my pleasure to recognize a special group of high school students from across Ontario who will represent Canada at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, the world's largest precollege science fair, next week in California. Intel ISEF brings together 1,500 students from more than 50 countries to compete for approximately \$4 million in scholarships and prizes.

I would especially like to mention Brian Krug, who is a student at John F. Ross CVI in my riding of Guelph. Brian's award-winning research examined a possible treatment for ovarian cancer that prevents the growth of blood vessels in tumours using, of all things, a chemical that is found in green tea.

As a technology leader, Intel is directly involved in education programs and technology access to enable tomorrow's innovations. For 13 years, it has also supported Youth Science Canada, which plays a vital role in nurturing scientific interest among our youth. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Intel and Youth Science Canada for their commitment to youth and science.

The McGuinty government knows we need a highly educated workforce to compete globally. That's why, since 2005, the Ministry of Research and Innovation has invested more than \$5 million in science outreach projects, sparking the scientific curiosity of more than 156,000 youths. Congratulations and good luck—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you.

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF ONTARIO

Mr. Randy Hillier: The easiest job in government must be at the correspondence unit of the Attorney

General. Everything he is ever asked about is either "before the courts" or "beyond the scope of his office," and he can never address anything specific. I have to ask: What exactly are the taxpayers of Ontario paying for with this Attorney General?

I have on many occasions requested the Attorney General to investigate complaints and allegations made by the people I represent against officials acting on the authority of the crown. Albert Werry, who's here with us today, comes to mind. He has been pursuing justice in this elusive maze of legalities we've built for more than a decade, and there are many, many others. All I ever get from this Attorney General is one of his stock replies: "I won't," "I can't," "It's not my job," or "It's before the courts."

Clearly, the Attorney General refuses to take responsibility for his jurisdiction, so let me ask this House: If not the Attorney General, then who?

1510

BREASTFEEDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Tomorrow is Canada Health Day, and on that day, I will be launching a report detailing important recommendations for a provincial

breastfeeding strategy.

Canada Health Day is dedicated to recognizing developments and successes in the public health and health care fields and to demonstrating our appreciation for the people who deliver health services. Perhaps most importantly, however, it is a day to reflect on the health needs of our society and commit ourselves to achieving more in the coming year.

Breastfeeding is a building block of lifelong health for our youngest Ontarians. Yet sadly, adequate support for breastfeeding is inconsistent and often sorely lacking in

way too many parts of Ontario.

The report I am launching, entitled Recommendations for a Provincial Breastfeeding Strategy for Ontario, outlines the necessary steps we need to take in order to support breastfeeding mothers and their babies, from

pregnancy, to birth and beyond.

This report was created by a coalition of important stakeholders, including the Ontario Breastfeeding Committee, the Registered Nurses' Association, the Newman Breastfeeding Clinic, Toronto Public Health, midwives, hospitals, pediatricians—the list goes on. This report offers a sound and well-researched plan for improving breastfeeding support and rates in Ontario.

I urge all members of this House to read this report and work with me in ensuring that babies in Ontario have the best opportunities for life. Breast is best, and health

promotion starts with your first meal.

THE BRIGADOONS

Mr. Jim Brownell: I rise in the House today to recognize one of Glengarry county's local bands, the Brigadoons, a Celtic band that has been honoured for its

commitment to Scottish culture. The band was recently nominated for the Scottish music award by the Quebec Thistle Council. The award was presented during a ceremony at the Black Watch armoury in Montreal last month.

Formed in 1971 by Rob Taylor, the band members of the Brigadoons have, through all these years, promoted Celtic music in Glengarry county and well beyond the county borders. Over the years, the band has had many members who epitomize the vast talent present in the county. Adding their talent to the band were Bob Burnie, Gaye Leroux, Jamie Wood, Brian MacDonell, Rick Link, Gerry Lefave, David Wright, Paddy Kelly, Shelley Downing and Bonita Leblanc. The Brigadoons now consist of Rob Taylor, Denis Carr, Jackie Smith and Luane Doyle.

To this day, they perform annually on Caribbean cruises, and they have had the pleasure of working with such stars as the Alexander Brothers, Natalie MacMaster, the Barra MacNeils, the Rankin Family, the Tannahill Weavers and the Battlefield Band. One of the highlights for this group is their performances each year at the Friday night tattoo at the Glengarry Highland Games in Maxville.

I would like to offer my congratulations to the Brigadoons on winning this award. They are strong contributors to local music and culture in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, and I look forward to watching them perform at the next Glengarry Highland Games on July 30 and 31 this year in Maxville.

ROYAL OTTAWA MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: It is my great pleasure to rise today to credit an institution that has been a cornerstone of care in Ottawa. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre, which is located in my riding of Ottawa Centre.

It opened in 1910 as a sanatorium for tuberculosis, and a century later has become a leading mental health centre serving all of eastern Ontario. The new 400,000-square-foot facility features a state-of-the-art psychiatric teaching hospital with 188 beds, and houses the University of Ottawa Institute of Mental Health Research.

The redevelopment of the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre in 2006 was part of a province-wide effort to bring mental health care out of the shadows and provide a leading-edge hospital with a healing, thera-

peutic environment.

This past Saturday, the community got together to celebrate the centennial of the Royal Ottawa Hospital. Despite the cold weather, a lot of members of the community were present, including Minister Madeleine Meilleur, MPP Bob Chiarelli, Ottawa Mayor Larry O'Brien, and Daniel Alfredsson, who is the captain of the Ottawa Senators and is involved with the Royal Ottawa Hospital.

Mental health issues affect many Ontario families. That is why the good work of the health care professionals, researchers, staff and volunteers at the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre must be recognized.

I extend my congratulations to CEO George Weber, Chair Janet Cosier and Vice-Chair Rob Notman.

LEADING WOMEN AND LEADING GIRLS, BUILDING COMMUNITIES AWARDS

Mr. Phil McNeely: My riding is home to 15 recipients of this year's Leading Women and Leading Girls, Building Communities Awards.

Last Friday in Orléans, five leading girls were honoured. They were Clare Knutson, Dorothy Krolak, Karine Landry, Myriam Venasse and Rosemary Ly. There were also 10 Leading Women, Building Community Awards, and they were given to Dr. Nathalie Beauchamp, Catherine Smith-Evanik, Kathy O'Neil, Marion Moritz, Nathalie Ménard, Kathi Langston, Elizabeth Allard, Amy Porteous, Renée Ladouceur-Beauchamp and Rosemary Swan.

I was delighted to honour them on Friday morning, when they were presented with their honours by the minister responsible for women's issues, Laurel Broten. I want to sincerely thank the minister for being there on such an important occasion for our community, and I want to thank the women and girls who received the awards. Their hard work and selfless dedication improve people's lives throughout Ottawa-Orléans, and they are fantastic role models for women of any age. We are grateful for the good work they do, as so many other women and girls have done across the whole history of this province, without which Ontario would not be this great place we are proud to call home.

I'm pleased that our government has decided to recognize the vital contributions made by the award recipients this year.

ANNUAL REPORT, INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2009 annual report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated May 11, 2010, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

STUDENTS AGAINST IMPAIRED AND DISTRACTED DRIVING DAY ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE JOUR DES ÉTUDIANTS CONTRE LA CONDUITE INATTENTIVE ET L'IVRESSE AU VOLANT

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 61, An Act to proclaim Students Against Impaired and Distracted Driving Day / Projet de loi 61, Loi visant à proclamer le Jour des étudiants contre la conduite inattentive et l'ivresse au volant.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Mr. Dave Levac: Very short. According to the explanatory note, the bill proclaims the third Tuesday in October in each year as Students Against Impaired and Distracted Driving Day.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT (INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION
DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT
(INSTALLATIONS INDUSTRIELLES)

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 62, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to regulate industrial facilities that use, store or treat hazardous materials / Projet de loi 62, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement pour réglementer les installations industrielles où sont utilisés, entreposés ou traités des matériaux dangereux.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Mr. Dave Levac: Yes, Speaker. From the explanatory note: The bill amends the Environmental Protection Act by requiring that industrial facilities that regularly use, store or treat significant amounts of hazardous materials prepare and submit an environmental report on their property every five years. The report will be available to the public.

1520

A facility that is ceasing operations is required to submit a final environmental report. Owners of industrial facilities are responsible for any environmental damage that occurs on their land while under their care.

BUILDING CODE AMENDMENT ACT (STORM WATER HARVESTING), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE CODE DU BÂTIMENT (RÉCUPÉRATION DES EAUX PLUVIALES)

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 63, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 with respect to storm water harvesting / Projet de loi 63, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment en ce qui a trait à la récupération des eaux pluviales.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Mr. Dave Levac: From the explanatory note: The bill amends the Building Code Act, 1992, to prohibit the chief building official from issuing a permit to construct a building if the proposed building includes or is served by a storage garage and does not include a storm water harvesting system. The prohibition applies to permit applications after or on January 1, 2012.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT ACT (SCENTED PRODUCTS), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SANTÉ ET LA SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL (PRODUITS PARFUMÉS)

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 64, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act with respect to scented products in the workplace / Projet de loi 64, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail à l'égard des produits parfumés sur le lieu de travail.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Would you like to make a short statement?

Mr. Dave Levac: Yes, I would. From the explanatory note: The bill amends the Occupational Health And Safety Act to require employers to prepare and review annually, in consultation with workers, written policies on the use of scented products in the workplace. Employers are also required to develop and maintain programs to implement such policies.

PETITIONS

GREENBELT

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition here regarding the protection of contaminated lands within the greenbelt.

I have quite a stack of them and I'd like to read the petition. It says:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Greenbelt Act was passed by the Ontario Legislature in 2005, economically affecting all ownership of properties in Ontario; and

"Whereas municipal property assessment caused financial changes to these properties; and

"Whereas the Ontario Legislature did not study the economic impact of the Greenbelt Act; and

"Whereas the effect of protecting environmentally contaminated land as a greenbelt area was not addressed financially;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The ordering of an economic impact study on the greenbelt area that will further the protection of the 'green' lands."

I will sign my name to it and give it to page Luke.

TAXATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this huge petition from First Nations from all over Ontario. There are over 580 names on it. It reads:

"Whereas Ontario has lost 171,000 jobs since October and over 300,000 manufacturing and resource sector jobs since 2004; and

"Whereas many families are facing the threat of layoffs or reduced hours; and

"Whereas, rather than introducing a plan to sustain jobs and put Ontario's economy back on track, Dalton McGuinty and his government chose to slap an 8% tax on everyday purchases while giving profitable corporations a \$2-billion income tax cut;

"Be it resolved that the undersigned call on the Legislature to cancel the scheduled implementation of sales tax harmonization."

I agree with the petition and will affix my name to it. I really like it when they're that big; it's easy to read. I send it to the table with Joshua.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I have a petition from the residents of the village of Embrun.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Government Services intends to close or move to another location in the township of Russell the Embrun licence bureau, presently located at 717 Notre Dame Street in the village of Embrun in the township of Russell;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Say no to the closure or move of the Embrun licence bureau and say yes to the establishment of an expanded office of ServiceOntario at 717 Notre Dame Street in the village of Embrun in the township of Russell."

GREENBELT

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Greenbelt Act was passed by the Ontario Legislature in 2005, economically affecting all ownerships of properties in Ontario; and

"Whereas municipal property assessment caused financial changes on these properties; and

"Whereas the Ontario Legislature did not study the economic impact of the Greenbelt Act; and

"Whereas the effect of protecting environmentally contaminated land as a greenbelt area was not addressed financially;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The ordering of an economic impact study on the greenbelt area that will further the protection of the 'green' lands."

I agree with this and have signed it and will give it to Rhett.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Peter Kormos: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Education's accommodation review process, used by school boards to accommodate students, and which includes closing schools, is flawed, lacks transparency and accountability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately stop the closure of Crowland Central Public School and any disputed closures. Develop policies where school boards are more accountable and the ministry, school boards, municipalities and community members work together openly and transparently to deal with funding, schools and declining enrolment."

This is endorsed by me, signed by hundreds and certified by the Clerk.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I would like to thank Glenn Voakes of Lisgar for having signed this one. It reads as follows:

"Whereas early childhood learning is a fundamental program in the development and education of Ontario's youth;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to expand full-day learning across the province;

"To continue to make our children a priority for this government;

"To continue investments in the infrastructure of our education system;

"To continue to support Ontario's families through these initiatives; and

"To never go back to the days of forgotten children and mismanagement of schools we saw in the 1990s. We applaud the new investments in full-day learning and look forward to their continued growth across the province."

I'm pleased to sign this petition and to ask page Lars to carry it for me.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Norm Miller: I have some petitions to do with front-line health care.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

"Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1-billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends;

"—increase wait times and lineups for patients;

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"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery; and

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I support this petition.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I have a petition to present to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that prays that Premier Dalton McGuinty and Finance Minister Dwight Duncan:

"(1) Ensure the province provides sufficient funding to maintain existing levels of child care service, and recognize cost-of-living and other legitimate increases in operating costs.

"(2) Provide all necessary tools to support the transition to an early learning program, including base funding for child care programs to support operations and wages comparable to the full-day learning program, in order to ensure that the child care system remains stable and sustainable."

I agree with this petition, sign it and send it to the table by way of page Mary.

TAXATION

Mr. Pat Hoy: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a duplicated tax system puts our businesses at a disadvantage by increasing the costs of doing business; and

"Whereas a single, unified tax system reduces the burden on businesses by removing the provincial sales tax on goods and reducing administrative costs; and

"Whereas both Conservative and Liberal members of the provincial and federal Legislatures have voiced their support of a single sales tax; and

"Whereas local chambers of commerce, economists and experts are also supporting the move to a single tax system; and

"Whereas the recent RBC Economics report found that the HST is improving the competitiveness of Ontario businesses by lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario; and

"Whereas a harmonized sales tax is expected to create jobs for Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government of Ontario's plan to implement the HST and other ... reforms to benefit Ontario businesses and consumers."

I hand this petition to Katina.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition from the wonderful people in Delta, and I want to make special mention of the Delta Community Pharmacy.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

"Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1-billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends;

"-increase wait times and lineups for patients;

"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery; and

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I sign the petition and send it to the table.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt. Here it goes:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients under" certain conditions; and

"Whereas" since "October 2009, insured PET scans" are "performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Rhett.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Jeff Leal: I have a petition today to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the worldwide demand for water is expected to be 40% greater than the current supply in the next 20 years; and

"Whereas Ontario has developed many new clean water technologies and practices since the Walkerton water contamination, which resulted from the poor water regulation practices of the former Conservative government; and

"Whereas Ontario has now implemented many new, improved practices for clean water regulation, developed better policies and fostered new clean water technologies; and

"Whereas the Ontario government's Open Ontario plan includes strategies to increase our province's ability to develop and sell clean water expertise and products to the rest of the world;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government's plan to introduce a new Water Opportunities Act to take advantage of the province's expertise in clean water technology, create jobs and new economic opportunities for our province and help communities around the world access clean water."

I agree with this and give it to our page. Yidu.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition here with thousands of names of people from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington who are exceptionally upset about the McGuinty government's policy on pharmacies. Their petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the people of Ontario depend on the accessible advice and services they currently get from their pharmacists; and

"Whereas pharmacies will not be able to continue to provide current service levels under the conditions proposed by the McGuinty government;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the current proposed changes to the Ontario drug benefit program not be adopted."

I agree with this, and I will sign it and hand it over to Tristen for the table.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

Mme France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury and Nickel Belt.

"Whereas a company's resumption of production with replacement workers during an illegal strike puts undue tensions and divisions on a community; and

"Whereas anti-replacement legislation in other provinces has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes:

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of replacement workers during a strike."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it. and send it to the Clerk with Joshua.

TAXATION

Mr. Dave Levac: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas a duplicated tax system puts our businesses at a disadvantage by increasing the costs of doing business; and

"Whereas a single, unified tax system reduces the burden on businesses by removing the provincial sales tax on goods and reducing administrative costs; and

"Whereas both Conservative and Liberal members of the provincial and federal Legislatures have voiced their support of a single sales tax; and

"Whereas local chambers of commerce, economists and experts are also supporting the move to a single tax system: and

"Whereas the recent RBC Economics report found that the HST is improving the competitiveness of Ontario businesses by lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario; and

"Whereas a harmonized sales tax is expected to create iobs for Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government of Ontario's plan to implement the HST and other tax reforms to benefit Ontario businesses and consumers" to create jobs.

I sign this petition and hand it over to Sarah.

TAXATION

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition that seems to be totally different than the one we just heard. It's signed by thousands of people. It's to the Legislative Assembly of

"Whereas the residents of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound do not want a provincial harmonized sales tax that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day"-now, that was a good word, "raise"-"and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone"-everyone-"to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to house sales over \$400,000; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees: and

"Whereas the blended sales tax grab"—a tax grab is what it is—"will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians" and Liberals:

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers."

I've signed this and give it to Ana.

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OPPOSITION DAY

PENSION REFORM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I move that, in the opinion of this House, at the finance ministers' meeting on pensions in June, the Ontario government should advocate for the strengthening and expansion of the Canada pension plan.

At home, the Ontario government can ensure that the 65% of Ontarians who currently lack a workplace pension have access to a decent retirement income by implementing an Ontario retirement plan that would:

ensure that all Ontario workers who want a workplace pension plan have a workplace pension plan:

-ensure that workers who believe they have a better way of saving for their retirement are able to opt out;

ensure that all employers match their participating

employees' minimum contribution rate; and

phase in contribution rates in a prudent and responsible manner for all employees and employers, with particular attention paid to the unique circumstances of small business employers and their employees.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day number 4. Further

debate? Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm really looking forward to this afternoon's debate because, as members of this chamber will know, for some time now-certainly since

January, when we tabled our own pension plan, but for

many, many years prior to that—New Democrats have, in this place, been advocating for reform to Ontario's pension system.

The bottom line is that people in this province who work all of their lives should be able to leave that working time to go into their years of retirement without any worries. They should be able to stop working at a reasonable age, end their working lives, but yet continue to actually have a life that allows and affords them dignity and security in terms of the ability to pay their bills and buy their groceries—basically affords them an opportunity to go through their most senior years with a decent quality of life. After working hard every single year of their working lives, the very least that Ontarians should be able to expect is that when they retire from their jobs, they are able to maintain a decent standard of living. It is not rocket science; it is a fundamental value that New Democrats hold, that people should be able to retire with dignity, respect, a decent quality of life and an income level that affords them that opportunity.

But the sad reality in the province of Ontario today is that two thirds of Ontarians simply do not have a pension plan that they can retire on. Two thirds of the people of this province do not have a workplace-based pension plan. It's unbelievable that we're butting up against a huge demographic issue in this province and in this country, where the baby boomer generation is about to retire and yet this basic issue of pension availability for people retiring has not been addressed. It has not been addressed at the federal level and it has not been addressed at the provincial level. It is absolutely unacceptable.

There's a whole other issue about all those people—and we know we've seen hundreds and thousands of them in my communities and in the communities of most of the members of this chamber—who do have a pension plan, but those pension plans, for some reason, weren't available for them when they did retire. I'm talking about those companies that weren't funding the plans appropriately, those companies that pulled up stakes and walked away and left their workers high and dry. That's a whole other issue that obviously needs attention in this Legislature and the federal Legislature, but it is something that this particular debate is not necessarily about.

We're more focused on the other two thirds of the people of this province who don't have that workplace-based plan. That's not to say that the one third who do don't need some reforms, because they absolutely do. In fact, we've brought reforms to those issues as well into this Legislature. My colleague Paul Miller, the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, tabled a bill that spoke to the need to reform our system in Ontario to make sure that those savings that people have set aside through negotiations in their pensions are actually available for them when they retire.

I know that my New Democratic federal colleagues have tabled legislation. Chris Charlton from Hamilton Mountain tabled legislation talking about putting workers first when there's a Companies' Creditors Arrangements Act situation, where there's a bankruptcy and people are in a situation where workers end up at the bottom of the pile, where all the other creditors are getting what's left of these companies, and workers are left—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: With scraps.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: —with the scraps, with a pittance, with really nothing. That needs to be addressed.

I commend my colleague from Hamilton Mountain on the federal scene for bringing forward legislation in that regard. Currently, there's a bill on the federal table as well that the member for Thunder Bay–Rainy River has put forward. The member has put forward a bill that speaks to similar issues around changing the federal pension system so that pensioners are able to ensure that they get what's coming to them, in terms of their pensions due, when there has been a bankruptcy.

All of that aside, we know there needs to be some reform there, but today what we want to talk about is the issue of retirement savings for those two thirds of Ontarians who simply do not have a workplace-based plan. I can tell you that it is something that we can do. It is absolutely possible to do that. We have to look at it from a couple of different perspectives.

Certainly, the New Democrats at the federal level, in support of the work that was done by the Canadian Labour Congress, have brought forward a plan that, hopefully, finance ministers will be able to discuss when they meet in June in PEI, just a couple of weeks away. This is a national issue. We support the activities of the CLC that are being voiced by the federal NDP in terms of shoring up or in fact increasing the amount of support that the CPP provides for the people of this country. New Democrats at the provincial level think that's absolutely necessary and important, and we support those reforms. We know that they are also talking about things like GIS reforms, guaranteed income supplement reforms, and we think that absolutely needs to be addressed.

We encourage our Premier, Premier McGuinty, or our finance minister, Minister Duncan, to go to that table in June, take a leadership role and really speak, as the largest province, for all Canadians and make sure that the idea of increasing the Canada pension plan for all the people of this country is front and centre in those discussions, in those negotiations on, I believe, June 13 in PEI.

I don't think that absolves this chamber, this Legislature and the people around this room from a responsibility to look after the workers of this province in terms of their retirement security. So when I say that it can be done, it can be done. We have actually taken some time over the last year, certainly, but the last year or so specifically, to put together something that we think is a very viable solution to the pension crisis that now faces Ontarians. And make no mistake: It is absolutely a crisis. It is a crisis when people are leaving their working lives and finding that they cannot pay the mortgage on their home anymore, or they cannot even pay the taxes and the utilities on their home anymore, because they don't have a pension and they cannot make ends meet on the current CPP and GIS.

There is absolutely a crisis, and the crisis is about to balloon, as I said earlier, with the demographic trends that we're butting up against right now. There is no doubt that there is an urgency around the issue of expansion of pension coverage for the people of this province.

I have to say I was quite taken aback this morning during question period when, in response to one of my questions to the Premier about the extent to which he was prepared to take on this leadership role and to really seriously consider the implementation of an Ontario retirement plan here in this province, he, in a very flip way, I believe, indicated that—his words were similar to this, and perhaps this is not a direct quote: "The public way is not the only solution," or, "The public solution is not the only way," or might not be the right way.

New Democrats fundamentally disagree with the Premier in that regard. When you look at what makes us Canadians, when you look at the things that Canadians are proud of, the things that we're proud of are things like a health care system that takes care of everybody. Right? Canadians are proud of that. Canadians are proud of an unemployment insurance system that takes care of everybody—at least it used to take care of everybody until the federal Liberals and Conservatives got a hold of it, but that's another story altogether.

This is a fundamental value that Canadians have: We

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believe there is a public good that we need to look after. Whether that public good is making sure that people who are unable to work, for whatever reason, are able to collect some unemployment insurance to get them through until they find their next job, whether it's the belief that people should have access to the health care they need or whether it's the belief that every child should have access to an education system that provides them with opportunities, these are fundamental values that Canadians hold and that Ontarians hold.

I would submit to the Premier of this province that one of the other values that the people of Canada and the people of Ontario hold is the value that if people work hard all their lives, when they retire they should be able to do that with dignity, with security and with a quality of life that enables them to live decently. That's a fundamental value.

I would say to the Premier that the best way to ensure the realization of that value in this province is to support the NDP motion that is before this House today. The reason I say that is because we have actually taken the time to work with experts to put together a pension plan, a retirement plan, for the province of Ontario that would really have a positive impact on people who are retiring in the future.

It's a plan that has been vetted by industry experts and that has been supported by many people in the pension industry and many retirement organizations. It is a plan that is practical, workable and implementable in a very easy way. It is modern. It's very flexible. It is a plan that we would only hope the government would take some serious time to look at and support.

Unlike some of the other plans that are floating around in this discussion—I guess "floating around" is really understating the vigour of the debate currently occurring about the pension issue. We have seen scores of articles in various newspapers and journals about the crisis in our pension system, and there are fundamentally two sides of the issue. I know that the Premier pretends there aren't, but it's pretty basic.

On one side, there is a plan like our plan, which says very clearly and specifically that we do not believe the way to provide the maximum opportunity for people's retirement in this province is to allow insurance companies and banks to skim off scads of administrative dollars and whittle away the savings of people so that they can make all kinds of profits into the future. We don't think that's the right thing to do. In fact, we think that those billions of dollars that they want to skim off the top actually belong to the people who are saving the money. We don't believe in this private scheme where the banks and insurance companies will be able to reap all kinds of benefits off the sweat and hard work of workers in this province and people in this province.

We believe in the other model that says that you're putting away your retirement money in a retirement plan, and that money is going to be managed by a professional administrative group with fees that are reasonable, in the best interests of the people who contribute to that plan. The plan would be a defined benefit plan where, after years of putting your contributions in, you know, within a range, exactly how much you are going to receive as your pension benefit when you retire.

We've even done the numbers to give us exactly what that figure is going to be. In 2010 dollars, our plan would provide people with between \$650 and \$700 of retirement income monthly. That's over and above the Canada pension plan. This is a supplementary plan. It's a plan that works, a plan that provides financial security and a plan that we believe this province needs and that is long overdue.

There are a couple of other features to the plan that I want to briefly touch on and then my pension critic, the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, will be spending some time going through more specific details about exactly what it is that we are talking about with the plan.

Fundamentally, we are talking about a plan that is contribution-based; in other words, workers and employers are expected to contribute to the plan. But the plan is not an RSP. It is not a plan that is a group RSP model in any way; it is not a defined contribution plan. In other words, the contributions are put into the pool, if you will. That pool invests, and the risks are shared across all of the contributors, all of the plan members. When you retire, you will be able to receive a defined benefit based on what your earnings were in your working life. So it's not based on how much you put in as an individual and what the whims of the market as it goes up and down will give you at the end of the day when you retire. It's not the kind of system that so many people unfortunately were burned by in the last economic

downturn. And this is exactly the reason why it is time to look at a public model like the one we are talking about, because being at the whim of the market does not mean economic security for people who retire.

The RRSP model simply does not work, and I think there is no time better than right now to reflect on that, acknowledge it, and move on from that system. That system has failed. And so for the Premier and the government to talk about how somehow we have to have a mixed model—the reality is, we already have that piece of mix; it's already there, and there are already all kinds of people making all kinds of money off of it. What we now need is the half of the model that isn't there, and that's our part. That's the part the New Democrats are putting before this Legislature. It is the piece that says that there needs to be a secure public place where people can put their money so that when they retire they know it's there for them for sure, absolutely.

When I said it was a flexible and modern plan, I want to explain what that means a little bit. When we put this together, we acknowledged that there might be people who really do not believe that they need to do this. They may already have a very secure income stream put away somewhere that they truly believe is going to be there for them when they retire. And if that is the case, then that's fine. There is an opportunity to opt out of this plan. We acknowledge that people want to have those kinds of options these days, and we respect that. There is an optout option available for folks. But make no mistake: The plan that we're putting forward is automatically enrolled—you're automatically enrolled in the plan. If you choose to opt out, you can. If you're opting out, of course, your employer is able to not contribute as well. If you're not contributing, your employer doesn't need to contribute. Employers, however, cannot opt out on their own. This is something that needs to be very, very clear: If the employee is in, the employer is in.

But we also recognize that it's not easy to transition into this extra amount of contribution—for neither employers nor employees—so we've also put together a plan that speaks to this reality by allowing a phase-in that allows people to gradually build up to the maximum contribution rate. And it allows employers to do the same. In fact, our plan even speaks to the issues of small business, acknowledging and recognizing, particularly coming out of this difficult economic time that we are, that there might need to be some extra consideration given for small business, particularly, people with 20 or fewer employees who need to have an even longer phase-in time frame so that they can absorb this kind of contribution obligation.

No matter which way you slice it, New Democrats have put forward something that meets the retirement needs of the people of this province, that is a practical, flexible, modern plan, a plan that can easily be implemented, a plan that provides the kind of security that we know the people of this province need and want. It's a plan that we don't think there needs to be all kinds of hesitation on. It's been endorsed by a number of different

parties. It's been discussed in a number of different forums. We continue to hear positive feedback and positive encouragement from the people of this province in regard to this plan.

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The issue becomes: What's going to happen now? Will the Premier of this province actually take the opportunity that is before him? I have to say, I think the Premier of this province has a significant opportunity before him to take a real leadership role when it comes to the pension issue, both on the national scene and on the provincial scene. I only hope that he's up to the job. I only hope that he actually gets the very unique opportunity that he has in terms of creating a new system of income security for the people of Ontario and, hopefully, when he goes to have that conversation in June or when his finance minister does, for the people of Canada. That's the leadership that Premiers of this province of Ontario have taken up in the past. Hopefully our Premier will be up to the job this time around; I certainly hope so. I know that it doesn't need to be a heck of a lot of work for him because, in fact, we've written the blueprint. It's something that he can very, very easily simply pick up and run with.

I'm going to leave, as I said, more of the details as to what exactly it is that we have in our plans as well as what the other side looks like. Let's face it: The Premier has a choice here; the government has a choice here. They either come down on the side that we would like them to come down on, a public plan, a plan that's taking care of the people of this province in a very cost-effective situation where the risk is spread amongst everyone and not an individualized plan, which we know isn't working—we have that side of the equation. Then we have the other side, the side that is expensive, the side that skims off huge amounts of administrative fees and other fees to insurance companies and banks, the side that in fact the member for Peterborough has decided to side with, the side that says it's okay to make profits off of people's retirement income. We don't believe that, but maybe the government does. This is the debate that's before us: We have a public plan that puts people first or we have a private, industry-driven plan that puts profits of banks and insurance companies first. It's either an NDP plan or it's a member-from-Peterborough plan, and the government needs to make a decision. The Premier needs to make a decision.

Quite interestingly, on Thursday in this chamber there will be a debate brought forward with the second reading of the member from Peterborough's private member's bill in terms of his idea around pension savings in the province of Ontario. I would hope that the members of this chamber really take a hard look at what the options are before us, because my belief is that it is time to make a shift in terms of how we think about people's retirement and how we think of our role as legislators and how the government thinks of its role as the government to make retirement income for people secure, reliable and, most importantly, robust enough for them to be able to

have a decent quality of life. It's time for the Premier of this province to take on that role and to show that leadership.

What I would ask is for the members of this chamber to think about this motion very seriously and consider what it is that we want to achieve here when it comes to the pension system in Ontario, what we want to achieve for those six out of 10 people who currently do not have a workplace-based pension plan. I would hope that the members of this chamber would see it in their interests, not only in their interests but actually in the interests of their constituents and of the people of this province, to support the motion that is before us today. It really is, I think, an opportunity for all of us to speak with a united voice about how important this issue is for us and also for the people that we represent. It is an opportunity to come together to say, "We absolutely support the idea of a pension plan for everyone, a pension plan for all that is secure, that is virtually risk-free, that is publicly operated and that is a public option as an alternative to the private options that already exist to an enormous degree in the province of Ontario and have actually failed miserably."

The reality is—and I think fundamentally everybody would agree that people deserve to retire with a decent amount of income; people deserve to retire with a certain amount of financial security; people deserve to have a quality of life where they're not worried about whether they can keep a roof over their head or whether they can keep food in their fridge. I think everybody would agree on those fundamental principles. It's a small step to acknowledge and recognize that the very best way to provide that kind of security is with the NDP's Ontario retirement plan. I look forward to the support of all of the members of this chamber on our motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I want to begin by thanking the leader of the third party, certainly not only for her thoughtful suggestion, but also for acknowledging the Premier's leadership role in taking the very serious issue of the adequacy of pensions in Canada—not just in Ontario—and bringing that out of the actuarial bear pits and into the public consciousness.

It's an important debate. I stand here as a member of the baby boom generation, and for us that debate takes on some real seriousness next year when the first baby boomer turns 65. We have a long way to go, not merely in Ontario but across Canada, before we settle on a best choice. I would just have to say that the leader's proposal is a very valuable contribution to that debate here today. It should be noted that we're not going to be adopting either this plan or any other plan today, but then again neither are we going to discard this option or its merits or its suggestions.

I and my colleagues are going to offer some criticism of this proposal. That said, we're going to offer the criticism in the spirit that I think the leader of the third party has advanced the proposal, which is that it's a serious proposal. To her great credit, by and large she has

kept the rhetorical tone moderate and focused on the people that we're all trying to benefit, who are Mr. and Mrs. Ontario and Mr. and Mrs. Baby Boomer, who, like me, are wondering: What is there going to be available for me at the time I choose to quit working, hopefully a choice on my terms, and I look to my savings, my equity, my pension plan and those other benefits available to me?

As those of us who are in this Legislature grew up, when people retired at that time, their life expectancy was somewhere around five or 10 years. That was then. Many of the pension choices that we live with right now reflect that actuarial statistic as it existed back then. But today, people are living 20 to 30 years after retirement. Indeed, it's not at all uncommon that people are living healthy, active, productive lives through their 80s, into their 90s, and its not at all uncommon now to see centenarians, and good on them. Next year, my beloved mayor and constituent, Hazel McCallion, who is active, productive and a wonderful mayor, will turn 90, and I'll be right in there wishing her a happy birthday.

This proposal, while it has some merits, does have a little bit of a not-invented-here component of the thinking, so in my criticism I'd like to bring it back to some of the things that the province is still trying to do and see if we can find some common ground.

Before this party was talking about pensions, your government had already acted and, in fact, in the fall of 2006 appointed Harry Arthurs to lead the Expert Commission on Pensions, which is an extensive review of pensions and which provided more than 140 policy recommendations for review by the government. The report was received in the winter of 2008, and the province introduced legislation less than a year later to deal with a significant portion of those recommendations. The next round of legislation is expected in the fall of this year, 2010.

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One of the concerns I have—and remember, this is a constructive criticism about the plan put forth here—is that it seems to require businesses, particularly small businesses, to contribute to the plan should their employees opt in. We have to get through an analysis on this, as some businesses are going to see this as an additional payroll tax that could have an impact on their ability to create jobs and to grow.

All that said, our position as a government has always been very clear. We favour a pan-Canadian approach that would allow for improved portability, which is very important for today's very mobile workforce. Many of us here were born somewhere else. Many of us may not necessarily retire in Ontario. The approach put forth here would set up an Ontario-only plan, potentially preempting the opportunity for a pan-Canadian set of reforms.

Is it portable or is it not? It will stand the test of a thorough and rigorous analysis of the type to which that party subjects proposals from this side of the House. So let's just reserve our conclusion on that and say that this is one of the legitimate concerns the government has about this particular proposal.

I would also ask—because I didn't really hear it: Do you qualify for the pension plan being proposed here if you've moved here from another province or another country? Again, it's not defined, and it should be viewed as a question, a query and a legitimate critique. Do you, in fact, continue to get the plan proposed here if you move away to another province or another country?

It leaves unresolved a number of key questions about this plan. For example, it doesn't define who would manage the money in such a plan. How would it be managed? It's a very important and not an altogether trivial concern. Also, how would you reconcile this if you were a franchisee and most of your expenses are compensation expenses? That would have a major impact on whether you'd think that would be sustainable.

Just before I give up my rotation here, I'd like to mention that Bill 236, the Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2010, the most significant pension reform package introduced in Ontario in more than 20 years, was introduced right here in this House in December 2009. It's covered right here in the government's budget. I would also bring to the attention of the members of the third party chapter 3 of the government's budget, which deals with tax and pension systems for Ontario's future.

The proposal here is one that is very much on the government's radar, very much a part of the government's budget. We thank the party for bringing it forth, and I'm sure, as my colleagues analyze it, they'll bring forth a number of our critiques.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I want to thank the third party for bringing up this very important issue. The leader asked us to take this seriously, and I hope that during the comments on the issues that I bring forward they will understand that I am taking it very seriously.

The leader and I were on a similar committee back in the spring of 2008, when the pension issue came up very predominantly, and we discussed some aspects of that. It's good to see that she has moved the issue on.

Once upon a time, Ontario used to have a competitive advantage in the province. When it first started out, whether it was workers' compensation or OHIP, Ontario had a business advantage that attracted individuals. The member who previously spoke mentioned that it was a tax. When you look at how workers' compensation came forward and how it was initiated, with that being considered a tax at that time—and the competitive advantage that gave the province of Ontario.

I've also been working on a provincial pension plan, and I have met with various groups and organizations, including members of the CAW and the labour council, and discussed, from their perspective, how to move forward. Their belief, actually, was that, as opposed to moving forward with a provincial plan, you need to move forward with enhancing the federal Canada pension plan; that that was the best move forward, as opposed to

establishing something. I mentioned that Ontario needs a competitive advantage and we need to see how we can move forward. Hopefully, this dialogue will give us potential opportunities for that.

I'm more concerned, actually, with the implementation and how the plan would work. You see, the pension plan, which I've done some research on in trying to get dialogue—there are a number of serious questions that need to be answered.

For example, contributions: Who's eligible to contribute? It sounds great at first: anybody working in Ontario. If a company is based in Quebec, and the workers are in Ontario, do they contribute to that plan? What about self-employed individuals? Are they required to have the option of another plan which is voluntary? Quite frankly, I find it difficult as to how you would bring forward a plan to be established province-wide without a large enough pool from which to draw the funds and to manage the funds properly to make it an effective plan. What do you do with self-employed individuals or workers who do not otherwise have a pension plan so that those individuals would have the option? What about a person who may work for an Ontario employer but not in the province of Ontario? Those individuals who live along the borders of Ontario: A lot of times they will work in the States or in other provinces and live in Ontario. What do you do with those particular individuals?

To continue on: What is the amount of the contributions? Is there a minimum? Is there a maximum? What are the tax implications, if there are any, in making the contributions? Specifically, is there a deduction from taxable income for the amount of the employee's contribution, if there is one?

Another aspect: It certainly sounded like the plan was voluntary. I'm not quite sure how you would be able to bring in a plan that's going to be that effective, when you're comparing it with the Canada pension plan, as a voluntary plan.

If an employee decides to contribute, must the employee continue to contribute so long as the employee stays employed with any employer? See, one of the aspects is that we're now looking at individuals in today's society supposedly working only five years and having a number of careers throughout their life. Is that plan going to be portable with the direct individual, as they go from here to here to here? How do you manage all those aspects?

If an employee can stop contributing, are the contributions vested or locked in at that time, or is there a provision for early payout before any retirement?

If an employee wants to contribute, is the person's employer also bound to contribute? I believe I heard that the answer was yes. Does the employer have an independent choice to contribute as well? Is there a matching contribution by the employer, as there is, for example, with the Canada pension plan?

If employers are not required to contribute, if the plan also allows for an employee or self-employed person to contribute whatever the person wants, and if the benefits can be withdrawn at any time, that makes for a plan like an RRSP. Under an RRSP, a contributor gets a deduction from taxable income for allowable contributions to a registered retirement savings plan. Ontario cannot amend the deduction since it is part of an RRSP set up under the Income Tax Act of Canada. But an Ontario bill could provide an Ontario tax credit for contributions to RRSPs that exceed the present allowable contribution. These are all questions that need to be answered.

What is the mechanism for collection, enforcement and investment of contributions? Who essentially manages that process? Who is going to be the body that's going to be able to collect these, to manage these, to determine the many factors that come into play? These are some of the things that need to move forward.

Quite frankly, this is a very in-depth thing, and if it's done correctly, this could possibly give the province of Ontario a competitive advantage once again when other businesses are locating and deciding where they're going to locate.

Regarding the benefits: When are benefits payable? Upon retirement? Anybody attaining a certain age? What about a contributor who dies before receiving any benefits? What happens to the benefits in that particular case? What about a contributor who becomes partially or fully disabled? When can you stop contributing? Is there a time limit when you stop contributing although you're still employed in the province of Ontario? How does that all play out? Hopefully we'll hear some of these things.

These are some of the aspects that I found when I was doing the research for an Ontario pension plan that needed to be answered, quite frankly, from all perspectives, whether it was business, labour or self-employed individuals. They didn't really have a set answer, but these are things that should come before the floor so that we can discuss these things.

How is the amount of the benefits calculated? I believe it's a defined benefit plan, but the leader did mention that there was a range of opportunities. Does that give the individual the freedom to determine which range they want to be in? How can you decide, if you have 10 years of contributions left, what range you're going to be in?

I imagine these things will all be calculated out, as I know the able member from the third party will certainly disclose this, as the leader had mentioned.

1620

Would Ontario pension plan benefits be fully integrated with, say, the public service pension benefits, as is the case with the Canada pension plan? You've got a number of plans based in Ontario. Would these be separate or would these be included in part of that entire plan when they're doing the calculations? One of the key things is to ensure that we have a large pool to draw from to make sure that it's stable.

There are other questions as well. What is the mechanism or body that would calculate eligibility and the amount of benefits and arrange for their payment? Also, when you're talking about the mechanism for the

body and the payment, as well as the mechanism for collection, enforcement and investment contributions, who manages the process? Is there a commission or other body to manage the program? Is that a provincially based one? How do you establish the membership within that? Is it contributors? Which aspect? These are some of the things that need to be discussed. What is the governance structure of that, and what relationship, if any, does it have with the government of Ontario?

If the body is to be controlled by the government of Ontario, its funds—here's one of the key things—could be viewed as property or part of the public money of Ontario. So when they're doing calculations based on the amount of funds that the province has, if you have this Ontario pension plan, is it part of the calculations when you're reporting the amount of funds that the province essentially has?

What are the permissible investments for the fund? Very clearly, you need to decide: Is it something based in Ontario, its investments? How do you determine where your investment is going to be, and who would be the deciding body?

I know that the leader from the third party had mentioned that there was a body that would be reviewing and looking at these aspects, but we need to find out exactly what are the boundaries for investments, how secure—long-term/short-term investments, GICs—and how they would play out.

What provisions do you want, for example, in audit or financial control mechanisms? Who's going to govern it just to watch and sure that things are moving along, and how often do these reviews take place to ensure that the payout funds are there to be able to contribute back to the province of Ontario and the individuals who are in receipt of them?

What appeal rights would there be for individuals, if any? To whom, and for what body? Is that on behalf of the individual contributor, or is it on behalf of the employer, who is also contributing? Where do you take that from? Who does it go to and where does the appeal take place?

There are a number of other acts that would need to be amendedL the Pension Benefits Act and probably a number of others. But these are some of the key aspects that I felt were necessary that needed to be brought up.

Certainly Ontario, as I said before, had a competitive advantage when we first started off with workers' compensation. It was viewed particularly at that time possibly as a payroll tax, but it was also viewed later on as a competitive advantage to a lot of businesses who were looking to invest and locate in Ontario; it attracted individuals based on that. Is this one of those possibilities, that the province of Ontario could establish a potential Ontario pension plan that would remove a lot of the onus by a lot of the businesses on their own personal pension plans in how it would unfold?

I think there are a lot of questions that need to be answered, and, quite frankly, a lot of these issues start with a vision and how it unfolds.

At that, I certainly hope that there are a lot of answers that will be able to come forward so that we can hear exactly how it may play out in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'm proud to stand up today and bring forth the plan for an Ontario pension that the NDP are bringing today.

Everyone deserves to retire with dignity and security. I don't think there's a member in this House who would disagree with that statement. The return for a lifetime of work in a wealthy province like Ontario should be the assurance that someday you'll be able to afford to retire, knowing that you'll be able to pay your bills and maintain a decent standard of living. You should be able to age not with worry but with security, stability and comfort.

Unfortunately, for the majority of the people in this province working today, there is no assurance of a decent retirement. In fact, unlike those of us in the chamber, fully two thirds of Ontarians don't have a pension at work. I worry that there are some of us in this House who may have sometimes forgotten where we came from. In my view, we have the responsibility as members of this assembly to ensure that hard-working Ontarians are paid back for their years of service, making our province and our communities stronger. The security of a comfortable retirement for all shouldn't be too much to ask.

New Democrats believe that we in this House must do better for the majority of Ontarians who have no pension, given the continued uncertainty in the financial markets and given the plight of many Ontarians who have watched pensions they thought were secure suddenly thrown into jeopardy. Those events should convince every one of us that the delivery of the insurance of secure retirement for all is simply the right thing to do. I remind all members in this chamber that not only is it the right thing to do, but it is well within our reach—better yet, a plan is already on the table.

The federal government could and should significantly increase the benefit levels of the Canada pension plan. This would draw on existing economies of scale, risk-sharing and the administrative efficiencies of that plan. The Ontario NDP joins with the federal NDP and the Canadian Labour Congress in the campaign for an expanded national, universal pension plan in the form of an enhanced CPP. We strongly urge the McGuinty government to take the message to PEI for the very important meetings coming up next month. We also support those parties' call for an increase in the GIS and reform to Canada's bankruptcy laws so that the pension plan members are ranked above other creditors in bankruptcy proceedings in this country.

That said, the issue of expanding pension coverage is an urgent one and deserves action now. We in the Ontario NDP do not believe that the Harper government is going to significantly expand coverage under the CPP. I suspect most members here today know that's true, and it's for that reason that we need to have a commitment to action here in this province.

The Ontario retirement plan: The NDP believes that Ontario should move ahead with other provinces and develop a supplemental employment-based pension plan for all working Ontarians who presently lack occupational coverage. In other words, we think a pension plan should be available to any Ontarian with a job who wants one, which is what the NDP Ontario retirement plan is really all about.

As both advocates for retired persons and industry insiders have concluded, the NDP plan is practical and workable. It's modern, flexible, accessible and would keep costly private administrative costs at bay, while offering the protections of a publicly administered plan. The Ontario retirement plan is the right plan at the right time.

Before I get into the specifics of how such a plan would work, I'd like to talk a bit about the benefits of such a plan. Firstly, and most obviously, the Ontario retirement plan would provide a modest retirement benefit to the roughly 65% of Ontarians who presently have no workplace-based pension coverage.

Secondly, in an Ontario retirement plan, the band of income that the contribution rate would be assessed against would be different from that of the current CPP. A broader band of income that the contribution would be based on would allow for a higher benefit for plan members earning over \$47,200, the current CPP upper limit. We believe that an upper limit in the range of \$65,000 to \$70,000 makes sense. This responds exactly to the kind of middle-income replacement rate issues that the pension expert Bob Baldwin identified in his report to the Minister of Finance that was tabled in Whitehorse in December.

Thirdly, an Ontario retirement plan could be used to further the consolidation of a fragmented workplace-based pension system. For example, Ontario has over 6,500 workplace plans, many of them very small. Many might elect to integrate into the large Ontario plan, which has as its base two thirds of the workforce of this province.

Fourthly, an Ontario retirement plan could allow for the transfers of RRSPs, which could be used to purchase past service credits for the basic benefit. This would allow older workers who would not ordinarily be able to earn the full benefit to receive more than they otherwise would.

Here is how it'll work: An Ontario retirement plan would be a publicly run, targeted, defined-benefit plan, much like the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, the hospitals of Ontario pension plan and the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Pension Plan. In order to maximize participation, every employee not enrolled in a workplace pension plan would be automatically enrolled in the Ontario plan, but the plan is not mandatory. If you have a better way to plan for your retirement, you don't have to take part in the Ontario retirement plan. And if, after opting out, you decide that the Ontario retirement plan turns out to be something you should have done and could get used to, you can opt back in. Employees and

employers would be expected to contribute equally to the new plan, and a minimum contribution rate would be established.

1630

Contribution rates for employees and employers should be phased in over a five-year period, and depending upon economic circumstances, a somewhat longer phase-in might be considered for small business employers. Unlike a defined contribution plan or a group RRSP, the assets of the plan would be invested for the plan as a whole, not on an individual basis. That results in far more security for the plan members and the plan as a whole. The maximum benefit of the plan would likely be between \$650 to \$700 a month in 2010 dollars. And because many current members of the workforce would not have sufficient years in the plan to receive the maximum benefit, plan members would be able to increase their normal benefit through a retroactive purchase of past service credits.

We believe that the Ontario retirement plan would be an extraordinarily cost-efficient vehicle for retirement savings. This is why we would keep all investment management activities in the public sector, either by farming these activities out to an existing large-scale public plan or by putting together a consortium of such plans.

As I said, we think the Ontario retirement plan is the most effective, practical plan out there. We haven't seen anything that can beat it. But clearly, the Ontario retirement plan proposal is only one proposal amongst many. There are tens of billions of dollars annually in new retirement savings that would be triggered by a new, comprehensive retirement savings regime, and the banks and insurance companies don't want to lose out on those management fees. Therefore, they are becoming increasingly aggressive in pushing their preferred options.

I would like to talk a bit now about why these options should be rejected. Using the 2007 Statistics Canada estimates for accumulated retirement savings, it's estimated that Canadians are spending almost \$15.6 billion per year, or 0.9% of their retirement savings, to have their retirement savings managed. The bulk of this is spent for retail management fees of various sorts levied by banks, insurance companies and their wholly owned mutual funds. What if the millions of Ontarians saving for their retirement could pay wholesale rates, essentially the rates provided by the public pension funds? If contributors were paying the wholesale administration costs offered by these large public pension funds, their fees would decline by \$8.4 billion a year, or equivalently, their retirement savings would grow by an additional \$8.4 billion a year. Stated still differently, the resulting 1.2 percentage point reduction in annual cost is equivalent to a 24% boost in the ultimate pension retirement savings that can be purchased.

This raises the important question of why all retirement savers should not have the opportunity to pay wholesale fees. Addressing it requires recognizing the private financial services industry as the beneficiary of

the annual \$11.2 billion in administration fees, which would fall by \$8.4 billion to \$2.8 billion with the wholesale pricing that public pension plans could provide.

The financial services industry argues that surveys show that their clients are satisfied with the current arrangements and that the additional \$8.4 billion per year represents unavoidable costs. More importantly, they say that the money buys their clients valuable advice and almost unlimited choice. Interesting statement; I'm still waiting for advice on what they do on our pension plan here, and I haven't had any. I've asked five times for it. In response, we need an NDP question: Why do longterm retirement savers have to pay for services they do not need? For example, the valuable-advice argument would be more persuasive if there was evidence that this advice actually produced higher risk-adjustment returns for their clients. It doesn't. In fact, the evidence points the other way. Studies in Canada, the United States and Australia all confirm what theory predicts: the higher the average cost of investing, the lower the average returns.

Finally, behavioural studies confirm what common sense tells us: Ordinary savers have far too much choice. In fact, most do not want to choose at all. So the question becomes: How can we best help millions of Ontario retirement savers who want adequate pensions at an affordable savings rate but don't want to get mired in the complexities of investing? We in the NDP say that the answer is obvious: Reject the proposals being pushed by the banks and insurance companies, and that, of course, means voting against the member from Peterborough's private member's bill that will be debated on Thursday. With due respect to the member, who, I am sure, is well intentioned, the member's bill is simply a thinly disguised version of a proposal being pushed by the insurance industry. The answer is clear: no. If we want a practical solution to today's retirement savings crisis, we need to look at large, public, multi-employer defined pension benefit plans like the CPP and our proposed Ontario pension retirement plan.

It is my sincere hope that all members will support the motion we've put forward. Voting in favour of this motion is a vote in favour of beginning the work to expand a decent pension option to the six in 10 Ontarians would don't have one at all. It would be a remarkable show of support for the thousands of Ontarians who don't have the security of a workplace pension that all members in this chamber said yes to this motion and yes to opening the door to a decent retirement for all of us.

I hope all members present will agree that speaking with a united voice on today's motion would send a strong message to hard-working Ontarians that reminds the citizens who make our communities work that we, in this chamber, are doing our best to look out for them. Everyone deserves the dignity of a decent pension, and the two thirds of Ontarians without one are far too many, in my eyes. I ask all members to join me in voicing support for hard-working Ontarians by voting in favour of this motion today.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: It is a privilege and honour to stand in my place and speak on this very important topic. Of course, I listened to the leader of the third party, who brings to this House a very important issue to be debated this afternoon, I listened to the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek speaking about the details of the plan, and I have some questions and concerns.

No doubt about it: After what happened to our province and to many different companies like Nortel and GM that almost went into bankruptcy and that have suffered for the last couple of years, pensions came as a big question for all of us in this place, especially the number of pensioners who live in the province of Ontario. We, as a government, thought that we were obligated to give them the support they need. That's why this issue and this debate this afternoon are very important.

I listened to the member from Stoney Creek and the leader of the third party speak about the plan. The member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek mentioned that a person has a right to opt in or out whenever they want, but I don't understand what the obligation of the company is if the person opts out. Do they still give them the support they need to invest in a different area, whether in an insurance company, buying RRSPs or choosing for themselves a better area to invest their money? I ask this question of the third party, and I hope they answer it soon or in the future, or that it is answered by the next person who is going to speak on this issue.

Also, who is going to manage this money? As you and many mentioned in this place, this is going to be big money. Who is going to manage it? The third question would be about work mobility between provinces. What is going to happen to a pension plan that is established in the province of Ontario when the person moves to Alberta, British Columbia or any different province? We have to come up with a lot of answers to many different questions.

There's no doubt about it: A pension plan for all Ontarians is very important, especially when we talk about 65% to 70% of the total population of this province who have no pension, and 30% who have their pensions divided between government, companies and individual insurance companies. That's why a unification of pensions will be very important for all the people across the province of Ontario.

Also, the Premier pays a lot of attention to this issue. That's why we, as a government, hired Harry Arthurs to conduct a report in 2006 to see how we can implement a national pension across the whole nation, because it's important for all of us. That's why we called on the federal government to come to the table with us as a province to put forward a strategy for all of us in the province of Ontario, because it's important.

When a person anywhere in the province of Ontario goes to work, whether they work at Tim Hortons or a big factory or as a CEO of a company or work here, all of us, I guess, are concerned about pensions. Therefore, I believe it is very important for all of us to put forward a national strategy for a pension for all the people in the province of Ontario.

All these details remain to be answered by the third party.

1640

That's why my position, in general, is that I'm in support of pensions. I support every person in this province having a pension, but how do we implement it? And which way do we have to take? These questions have to be answered. We have to put down a strategy, as the collective elected officials in this place, to find a common place and direction we can take that will be accepted by the business community, by the government as a collector of taxes, and also by the people who are going to benefit from those pensions.

I know that my colleague is about to launch an idea this coming Thursday on how he sees we have to have pensions in this province. We cannot rule it out, because we believe in discussions, whether through insurance companies, a company, the federal government or whatever. We have to have that discussion, because it's very important for all of us. We shouldn't rule out any potential ideas or any issues or any directions, because we have a vast interest in finding a way for the future generations who want to work and live in the province of Ontario.

We have to remember that if we don't come up with a solution, those people with no pensions, when they get sick, will have no place to live. As a government, as tax collectors, we are obligated to support them in many different ways, whether through Ontario Works or through the hospital system. All these elements collectively will cost us more if we don't come up with a plan to have a good pension for all the people of Ontario. It's our obligation to support the people. We cannot leave them in the street. We cannot let them live without food. All these obligations are asking us and forcing us to find a solution to create a safety mechanism for the people who live in the province of Ontario.

I'm here in the House today to listen to the discussion and the debate—because it's an important debate—and, more importantly, to find the logical solutions and financial solutions to all these questions in a professional manner.

I think it's an important debate, and I'm looking forward to hearing more about it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: First off, before I speak to this motion, everybody in the House will be pleased to hear that David Cameron has won and is now the Prime Minister of the UK. After 13 long years of a liberal, socialist government, the people have had enough and they now have a Conservative government in the UK. I'm sure we're all pleased to hear that today.

I have a lot of regard for my colleagues in the NDP. We have some distinct differences in philosophy, but I do

appreciate their honest convictions and principles. Unlike those on the other side of the House, I do know that they are honest and have conviction, although I disagree with the outcomes of their discussions.

I think it is important to recognize in this opposition day motion that where we see the commonality between the Liberal Party and the NDP is in this innate belief that we can create perfection, we can create utopia, if we just create one more law; that if we just take away freedom a little bit more, things will be that much better. Of course, we know they're well-intended and have honest convictions, but we also know that intentions paved roads to some places that we don't like to be.

I want to speak first, now, to this idea that under the NDP plan, we can mandate, remove people's freedoms and put in place that everybody must have a pension. Of course, there's a cost involved with that. Somebody who owns a corner store and would like to have an employee has to pay a minimum wage now. Often, they can't even afford to pay that minimum wage—the margins are not high enough; the business volumes are not high enough—but now they would also have to pay and contribute to a pension plan. What is going to happen to those people? Are they going to remain having a job, or is the small business owner going to end up laying that person off because he just can't afford that employee anymore? Again, this is where the unintended consequences have to be thought of. We have to put some focus on and have some foresight over what will be the actual consequences of a particular piece of legislation or motion.

We can see what has happened around the world. I was reading the other day that in Spain it's mandated that the government will provide everybody who is retired with a week's holiday, all paid for—a week's holiday in Spain at a resort, with food and wine included. That sounds really nice, that the state provides a week's holiday. Well, we know what predicament that places countries such as Greece and Italy in. What are the countries? They're called the PIIGS of Europe: Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain. They cannot afford those utopian policies; they'd go bankrupt. That's not what we want to do with our legislation. That's not what I want to do. I know it's not what the NDP wants to do. They don't want to put people into bankruptcy. They don't want to limit employment opportunities. But that's what happens when we bring forth legislation that is not well thought out and the consequences are not looked at in detail.

An additional item here: When the leader of the third party was up speaking to this motion at the initial stage, she mentioned that these are values of Canada, values of the people of Ontario, that we are proud of our education, proud of public education, proud of public unemployment insurance, proud of public health care. I was thinking, as she was saying that, that I have a little bit of a different take. I would be proud of employment more than unemployment insurance. If all people were employed, that would really be something for us to be proud of, instead of being proud of a system that says, "There is

unemployment, and we will assist people who are unemployed." Would we not all be prouder, have more pride, if we did not need unemployment insurance?

The same with health care: She said we're proud of public health care. Well, I would be really proud of our public health care if there were no wait times, if none of our people had to go to the United States to get medical care. Those would be things to be proud of.

The same with education: Proud of our public education. I say this: Once again, I would be much prouder of our education if it was of a higher calibre and higher quality. This is one of the differences between Conservatives and socialists, or liberal socialists. It's not just a case of being proud of the process; we ought to be proud of the objective. What did we achieve? What did we get out of this? It's not just to be proud of the process. That in itself is not enough to be proud of. What is the end? Did we achieve the end? Did we achieve what we set out for?

As well, what we don't see in this motion, what is not clearly seen in it, is the removal of the freedom. If I want to set up a business-maybe I'll put it this way: Right now people have a choice. When they go out seeking employment, they can seek employment in places that have pensions; they can seek employment in places that don't have pensions. They have a choice where they choose to work, and I want to see that freedom of choice remain. Of course, what I'd love to see are higher rates so that people can contribute more to their personal savings through RRSPs. Now, that would be a worthy goal if we changed the rates so that people could contribute more to their RRSPs, because it's not just a pension plan. Really, what is the greatest pension plan is our own personal responsibility to save money. That is the greatest pension of all: personal savings that are done with their free will and their ability to find good employment and an ability to save money.

1650

So let's look at ways that we can do that. How can we assist the people of Ontario to save more and have more in their retirement years without removing people's freedoms and without putting a burden on businesses that may and will reduce employment levels? We don't want to see that reduction in employment levels.

Once again, the NDP motion—well-intended; I agree with the broad concept that people should have more money in their pockets and in their bank accounts when they retire. I'd love to see it happen. Will this motion do it? Unfortunately not. I can't support things that will have a negative consequence.

I would like the NDP to sit down and think this one through a little bit more about what happens to those small employers with this added cost. What's going to happen to them? I know they do not want to see employees laid off and a loss of jobs.

But going back, the NDP thinks that everything that is public is good. We know what happens when the public is the one who does things, when the collective are the ones who do things, instead of individuals saving,

individuals working—we get a far, far more responsible society and a far more free society and one that has built this country, built this province.

This province and this country weren't built just with public expenditures and public policies. It was built by individuals who worked hard, who saved hard and contributed to their community, not because of another law but because of their inherent goodwill to others. That is the nature of Canadians. It's the nature of the people of Ontario. Our legislation and laws should reflect that, should abide by it, should promote that, not this idea that we'll just create another law, remove a little bit more freedom and utopia is just around the corner—but with every law, utopia becomes farther and farther away.

So I want to congratulate the NDP for putting that forward, that people ought to have the ability to save more, to have more, to be able to retire, but it is not going to come to fruition with this motion. Thank you very much, and we will hope that the NDP takes some of those into consideration.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Chiarelli: First of all, I want to thank the leader of the third party for this motion. It certainly is substantive. It's well-thought-out from a policy point of view. I want to also take this opportunity to compliment the third party on their commitment to workers' rights, social justice and pensions. And although I agree with their sense of urgency and crisis with respect to pensions in Canada, more so across the country, as well as in Ontario, this motion should better be dealt with being deferred and dealt with at a subsequent time rather than being voted on today. My sense is that it will be defeated today. There's a lot of substance in here that's worthwhile being continued in the debate on pensions as we move forward. This motion, in my opinion, is premature.

Yesterday, the leader of the third party asked the Premier whether he would vote yes or no for this particular motion, and the Premier said no. Today, again the leader of the third party asked the Premier whether he would vote yes or no for this particular motion, and the Premier said no. He provided the answer, and he said that this is a pan-Canadian issue, this is an issue to be dealt with across the country by all the provinces, and I agree with him. One of the main reasons for my agreeing with him is that both the federal and provincial governments at the present time are in the middle of consultations, Canada-wide. They're getting ready for a conference on pensions in the very near future.

There is no question that all organizations of any size with pensions in Canada, be they government or private—and every employee, with or without a pension—have received a wake-up call from corporate failures such as Nortel and Abitibi; a realization, particularly among pensioners and indeed many pension managers, that there is no protection under bankruptcy laws for pensioners, that they get in line just like all the other creditors. Pension managers are very concerned.

There has been a proliferation of pension funds in Canada with deficits.

Yes, there is need for urgent action, but there is a process under way. I was very pleased last Thursday to participate in a round table with the Minister of Finance of Ontario and a number of pension leaders from across Canada. The dialogue was very useful; the concern was very common. There was certainly a consensus in the room that we had to reach a consensus in terms of all of Canada, including the provinces. Just for the information of the members and the public, the people who were in that room consulting with the Minister of Finance were the following: Association of Canadian Pension Management, Mr. Scott Perkin, president; Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Ms. Sherri Toriman, vice-president; Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Mr. Ian Dawkins, policy analyst; Canadian Institute of Actuaries. Mr. Marc-André Vinson; Canadian Labour Congress, Mr. Hassan Yussuff, secretary treasurer; Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, represented by Dave Coles, president; an independent consultant, Mr. Bob Baldwin; International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, Mr. Louis Erlichman, Canadian research director; Investment Funds Institute of Canada, Mr. Jon Cockerline, director of policies and dealer issues; the Nortel retirees protection committee, Mr. Don Sproule, president; and the Public Service Alliance of Canada, Mr. Steve Jelly, executive assistant.

That consultation is necessary in this crisis. To bring forward now a motion to be voted on today, in my opinion, as I say, is premature. It pre-empts that necessary consultation in order to help build a Canadian consensus for a Canadian solution. In one way or another, they all said we need a Canada-wide coordinated action, and there was also considerable discussion about portability, which is very important for the economy, and it's very, very important for the social structure of Canada for people to be able to move across this country and feel economically secure.

After 19 years of elected office as an MPP, elected regional chair and mayor of the city of Ottawa, I came to one major conclusion, and that is that there's a major problem with efficiency and productivity in this country that comes from lack of alignment from federal, provincial and municipal policies. Pension is a very, very good example.

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If you want to take another good example, it's the HST. You have the federal Minister of Finance saying, "We need the provinces with PSTs to harmonize in order to create jobs, create efficiencies and save money for small business." The same can be said about pensions. Pensions are just a hodgepodge of regulation and legislation across Canada. We need to organize them; we need to get together and work as a country.

I will vote against this motion. I appreciate the substance and credibility of the motion and the thought that's gone into it, but it needs to be dealt with after the

consultation, as a result of the consultation, and it needs to be a Canada-wide solution.

Those are my remarks. I will vote against the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Shurman: Pensions are a pretty topical thing these days.

Mr. John O'Toole: Especially if you don't have one.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Yes, especially if you don't have one, and I think I speak for most of us in this chamber when I say that we don't have one.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Yes, I know how it disappeared, and I thank the member from Peterborough for reminding me.

The point is, pensions have been an extremely discussed topic over the course of the past two years because so much of people's pensions—or, at the very least, people's retirement savings—have evaporated. Sure, we're in recovery, but a lot of that is not coming back. The people who were hurt the most were the people who, during the period of time when those pensions and savings were evaporating, needed the money, needed the income. They had to raid the capital that they had, they depleted it, and while the rest of the world may be looking towards a recovery, albeit in fits and starts, those people are not going to recover. So you've got people 75 years old who are actually looking for some kind of work and, in some cases, thank goodness, getting it.

In any event, the events that began in the latter part of 2008 brought to this Legislature and to many other venues monster names like General Motors and Nortel. We got into discussion about the people who were lucky enough to have private pension plans, and what was going to happen when those defined benefit plans that were operated by gigantic corporations dried up, as these seemed to be doing at the time. One did; one was bailed out. The point at the time was whether or not we could expend public funds, I suppose, on a go-forward basis, to bail out these funds as they dried out. The answer was then and is now that we can't, but it underscored the whole issue of pensions and how they affect us as citizens. Citizens cannot bail out every plan, but, moreover, citizens have to have a means to live as they age.

I can remember very well a time in 1966. I had a number of temporary jobs when I was in high school and in university, but then in 1966, I got my first real job. There are people in this Legislature who would remember that experience, and probably, to some extent, around the same time. In those days, when you signed that first card they gave you on day one of work, it was very typical that it had a place where you acknowledged that you were going to be part of a registered pension plan; not an RRSP—they didn't exist yet—but a registered pension plan. You were going to join a defined benefit plan that your company ran on your behalf, and it was usually organized by one of the large financial organizations in the country. I signed up. The concept would be that I would pay something and the employer would

pay something. That was an accepted norm, and it was something that could be done and was done at the time. There was no opt-out. It was basically a guarantee of some defined benefit.

The question that is asked by the New Democratic Party in its motion today, in a very real sense, is: Who really has that now? It's my question, their question, everybody's question, and the answer is: about 35%, 38% of people. And who are they? They are, for the most part, people who either work for the remnants of these gigantic corporations that have offered defined benefit plans since time immemorial, but more often they are public sector employees who have become the de facto new elite within our society. They're the lucky people who know that, at a given point in time, the pension plan that is there on their behalf by the government that they work for-be it the Ontario government, the federal government or the municipal government—is going to be there for them when they retire. And the rest of us? We have a problem.

I'm very happy to stand here today and be talking about pensions, albeit I can say that the PC caucus generally can't support a motion of the type that the New Democratic Party is bringing. I want to congratulate the New Democratic Party for confronting it, because whether it's a plan that I can stand and support or not, it is at least an attempt to shine a spotlight on something that is terribly deficient in society, because what's happening is, we're creating a new generational gap in society. It's becoming visible now, but it's going to be screamingly visible over the course of the next number of years as baby boomers, of whom I'm on the leading edge, become the elderly, the seniors in our society, and we see so many of them who will not be able to live forget about in the style to which they've become accustomed, but who will not be able to live, period.

So the question becomes, do you want to address this now?—not that you can help anybody who's going to retire in the next two, three, five or 10 years. But on a goforward basis, do you want to look 10 years and 20 years ahead and make sure that you don't institutionalize or systematize this kind of a deficiency in our society, and you make sure that the next generation to come along doesn't have to look at that? Because I've got to tell you, our generation may not have done a very good job. We spent our money instead of saved our money, at least many of us did, so the generation has a lot of problems.

Who's going to wind up having to support them? Folks are going to be forced to spend their money through higher taxes to fund people who are on welfare because they can't afford to live any other way. That's what we're facing and that's why we have what is a growing crisis—a pension crisis.

This is not to say, when I talk about not supporting the motion, that I don't understand the motion. It's not to say that I don't accept certain points within the motion. "Ensure that all Ontario workers who want a workplace pension plan have a workplace pension plan"—it seems reasonable to me. That's one of the points the NDP has

put into the motion. "Ensure that workers who believe they have a better way of saving for their retirement are able to opt out." These are points I can accept, regardless of where they come from.

It's the overall tenor of what the NDP is talking about that I don't accept, because what I've heard very particularly from my friend from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek is a chapter-and-verse approach to how we're going to do this, and very particularly a plan that applies to people who live in Ontario. You can talk about portability all you want. We need something that's ultimately portable; we need a national approach to this.

I am not prepared to, at this point, present myself as an expert. I will be quoting some experts as I go on in my talk today, but I'm not an expert on pension plans. I can simply agree with the concept of needing something that serves us better than what exists now, which is a notional contribution made under a registered retirement savings plan that I have access to, that I have some limit placed on me based on my tax bracket and to which I may or may not and, most often in this country, will not contribute to.

In speaking recently to Bill 236, which was the first pension bill, as we understand it, of two pension bills that the government is bringing forward, I said that it was nonsensical to spend so much time on a bill that did nothing for the two thirds of Ontarians who don't have a pension plan.

I think it's fair to say that if that were the substance of what we're talking about today in isolation, everybody here could agree. We're talking about who ultimately pays: Who pays for this generational issue? Who funds the people who are going to need the money going forward? I respect that the motion proposes a solution for those Ontarians who don't have a private pension, but I'll say for the last time that I can't agree with the idea.

I myself happen to be on CPP now because you have the opportunity, as some people know, to take your pension without any clawback at age 60, which I reached two and a half years ago, and so on it goes. So I collect the phenomenal sum of \$600 and a bit per month. Had I waited until 65, I would have collected \$800 a month. I'm not trying to say that \$600 and change is anything to sneeze at, but it's not something to live on, that's the issue, and neither is \$800. These days you've got that and you've got what your spouse or partner gets, and then when you get to 65, you get the old age supplement. Maybe you get a second old age supplement, and if you're lucky, you've cobbled together about \$2,500. That's what you're going to live on unless you have some investments that you've made, unless you're in the one third of the population who has a defined benefit plan. That's pretty tenuous, and that's the problem that we're talking about.

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We in the PC caucus understand the plight that many, indeed the majority of Ontarians, find themselves in. They are people, we are people, who have worked hard all of our lives. We have raised families and probably in

most cases have done something to assist the kids in putting them through school. We might even have helped our kids put something down on their first home, because most kids can't save the kind of money that's required for a down payment, and that's notwithstanding the low mortgage rates. Look at the price of houses these days. But most importantly, this is a generation that paid its taxes, and it paid its taxes, in large degree, sometimes to the detriment of the ability to save. While doing all of this, some of us, but not enough of us, managed to save for retirement more than others. That's why we need to level the playing field.

What happened, however, to the people who were successful at saving is what I mentioned at the outset of my talk this afternoon, and that is that they had those savings decimated over the course of the last year and a half, and many of them find themselves in dire straits, so they're working. I know people who are answering the telephone at home in a virtual call centre environment. They're doing it for \$10 or \$11 an hour. We're talking about 75-year-olds. Is that really what we want? Is that what we want for our golden agers? Is that what we want to see ourselves doing in our golden years? This is not a complaint, but an observation. People in this Legislature don't have a defined benefit pension plan. We have an RRSP. You'd have to be an MPP for a very, very long time to look to that RRSP to do very much for you in terms of keeping you in the style to which you have become accustomed.

For many, their savings and stock holdings may not have come back to the original levels at this point in time. On top of that, thanks to the Liberal government, they are seeing their energy bills soar. It's shameful, and I might make this observation, that we're even discussing that at this point, putting this kind of an extra burden on people who have gone through what they've gone through over the course of their lives, serving their country, serving their province, bringing up their families, having savings depleted and now being on a fixed income that's not at the level that they expected and having an additional 8% added as well. According to some estimates, if you take a look at the energy bills, that interest would be maybe 25% by the end of this year. My sources say that it's even more. Do you know what? That's not euthanasia; that's death by 1,000 cuts. There are a lot of things besetting our elderly.

If that wasn't bad enough, on July 1, almost every good and service that these people, and the rest of us, purchase is going to cost them another 8%.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: No, it's not.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Yes, it is. Every service is going to cost another—as a matter of fact, I might single out, for my friend from Essex, the fact that the additional services will include the fees that they pay to administer the investments that they have. Go think about that. Worse yet, as they try to manage their retirement savings to maximize their returns, the assistance that they rely on, it charges them. If you've got a mutual fund with a 2% management fee on it on which you pay GST, now you

get to pay 13% on that, and an exemption was not even considered on that.

If we wanted to help out those millions of Ontarians who do not have a pension, the McGuinty Liberals could at least have started—or still start; it's not too late—by cutting them a break on the HST on mutual fund transactions. But I know that that suggestion, and you can see it by the reaction on the other side, is falling on deaf and unsympathetic ears.

I'd like to read into the record at this point some material that comes from the ACPM. The ACPM is the Association of Canadian Pension Managers. I said I wasn't an expert. I know for a fact that there are precious few of you in this chamber who are experts on pensions. These guys are the experts, so let's hear what they have to say.

"ACPM believes that several large plans operating multi-jurisdictionally would provide the flexibility and choice of savings options that employers and individuals need"—that's the word they used—"while encouraging diversification of capital, economies of scale and competition benefits.

"Another government-mandated payroll tax is not what the economy needs, especially when, for many, there are better ways to prepare for retirement.

"ACPM is agnostic on publicly run versus privately run plans, as long as it is not only public plans; [the] same rules should apply."

They're not in favour, and this is very important in the context of the motion, "of CPP involvement in supplemental plans, if there is risk of creating one large megafund."

They talked about diversification—these are the people who know. They say, "Private sector creativity and expertise is the best way to develop choices and educate Canadians."

I've got to say, aside from the fact that I trust experts, that that makes perfect sense to me. As a matter of fact, the topic of what to do about those Ontarians without private pensions came up at a round table discussion I personally led last month with some people at the Investment Funds Institute of Canada.

What do these people do? They manage mutual funds. What are mutual funds, if not really an avenue to retirement? I own some, I'm sure that many people who are watching us on television own mutual funds, and I think there are people in this House who own mutual funds. You watch the ebbs and flows, but essentially what you're talking about are funds that are diversified in a way that is pleasing to the buyer and that at the end of the day are supposed to grow and provide you with greater output than the input your original investment represented.

They were very interested in talking about the discussions currently ongoing between the provinces and the federal government. So I'd like to say now what I said then. In our view as a party, creating yet another level of government bureaucracy to deal with pensions or retirement savings is not the answer. That is what this

motion seeks to do. I have a to-do list when it comes to pensions. The first thing I would want to do is revisit RRSPs. RRSPs are now a decades-old solution. Yes, this have been modifications in how RRSPs work in terms of maximum contributions and in terms of the contribution being indexed to cost-of-living as well as to income levels, but it's really time for a rethink.

We have to look at widening the scope of RRSPs. We have to look at harmonizing the treatment of funds that go into and come out of RRSPs. For example, in my registered retirement savings plan, I designate some of the investment to be investment that realizes dividends or makes capital gains, but when, in six and a half or seven years, I have to purchase a registered retirement income fund with those funds, when the money comes out, it won't be treated the same way, and I'll be taxed at the maximum to whatever level of income I'm pulling out of it. That has to be revisited. That is national in scope. It's not something we can handle at the provincial level.

We have to look at leverage with regard to incentive to go beyond. In other words, we have to give people a reason to want to contribute and, I dare say in some respects, have to contribute to the go-forward position that envisions their ultimate retirement. We all get old. We're all going to retire. And it seems that regardless of financial conditions, not enough people have made those contributions, so we have to put in levers to ensure that they do. We have to make sure that we use the people I've been talking about, the professionals who understand how to manage money.

We have good ones in Canada. IFIC, the organization I mentioned, represents a number of people. I have no particular drum to beat for them, but they're looking for something to do. As far as I'm concerned, investing in mutual funds that are particularly Canadian-based is a good idea. Trusting folks like that to do the job would be a better way than entrusting this to yet another level of bureaucracy that we could, and our friends in the NDP would, create.

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In concluding, let me just say that much like the local health integration networks—the LHINs—have absolutely nothing to do with improving health care delivery, so too the bureaucracy required to implement and run an Ontario retirement plan is not what we need for the solution. We don't need more bureaucracy. We don't need more, dare I say, pensioned public sector workers. It simply adds another layer of government that will cost taxpayers money and will seek to shield the government from accountability. So, on principle, if for no other reason, we in the Progressive Conservative caucus cannot support that.

Focusing on an Ontario-only plan is not the answer, because we know today that Canadians are incredibly mobile. Not only do they move all around this country; they will move all around the world during their working lives, more and more so. Any solution to the pension problem—which we absolutely agree with our friends from the third party is a problem—must be national in

scope, must be confronted by the government of the day, must be confronted now. It's already getting too late. It has to provide mobility. Its standards must be national in scope.

Finally, I would argue that the private investment sector is absolutely the best place to play a role in whatever solution is finally agreed upon. The other part of the NDP motion calls on the government to advocate for the strengthening and expansion of the Canada pension plan. The bureaucratic nightmare of one megafund is something that we don't want to face now.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Leal: It truly is a privilege to participate in this debate this afternoon. I happen to think there's no greater issue that's around today, in terms of providing people with pensions. The question becomes: How do we get there and what combination of models do we use to get to the position where we want to make sure that we provide Ontarians and indeed Canadians a reasonable flow of retirement income to sustain a lifestyle they have become accustomed to?

I would certainly confess that I'm not an expert in this area, but over the last number of years I've taken the time to become much more educated in this area. I had a former private member's bill, Bill 96, which was the first of my pension reform bills. Bill 96 was an act respecting protection of retirement savings plans in the event of a bankruptcy. It has been reported back to the House. This bill simply, of course, in the event of a bankruptcy, will allow those savings that were put into RSPs to not become part of the bankruptcy proceeding; indeed, to guarantee those funds so that that individual or company that found themselves in a bankruptcy position would have the opportunity to retain those RSPs intact to provide a future retirement income.

Members of the third party, particularly my good friend from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, indicated that we'll have a discussion during private members' time this Thursday to deal with Bill 54, my second private member's pension bill, which will look at another model in order to provide a retirement income for Ontarians.

I happen to believe that at the end of the day, we'll have a combination of both a private sector model and indeed some new initiatives that will be brought forward

by the private sector in this particular area.

It's interesting to look at the history of the Canada pension plan. Back in 1963, the then newly minted Prime Minister, Mr. Pearson, launched a series of white papers on a nationwide pension plan. This first white paper was released in 1963. It was circulated to all provinces. Then, in April 1965 royal assent was given to Bill C-136, which created the Canada pension plan and indeed the Quebec pension plan, because when the Canada pension plan was opted out, all provinces had the opportunity to either opt in or opt out. Because of the Lesage government in the province of Quebec, they decided to opt out. They created the Quebec pension plan, which in fact mirrored the provisions of the Canada pension plan, which was enacted in nine other provinces.

While there is great talk about reforming the CPP, I want to remind people in this House that any major amendments to the Canada pension plan must be approved by Parliament, and at least two thirds of the provincial governments, representing no less than two thirds of the Canadian population, would have to be put in place to bring about any amendments to the Canada pension plan.

Of course, we have the history; we all know the basic provisions of the current Canada pension plan. Every person in Canada between the ages of 18 and 70 who has a salary in excess of \$3,500 must pay into the Canada pension plan. Both the employee and employer contribute to the CPP equally, at a 4.95% rate. Self-employed workers pay the full amount of 9.9%. None of these costs associated with CPP are funded through general tax revenues.

The first big change in terms of the administration of the CPP happened in 1997. In 1997, the CPP Investment Board, CPPIB, was created to invest the assets of CPP. As of December 31, 2009, the Canada pension fund was worth \$123.9 billion.

The CPPIB invests in more than 2,900 public companies around the world, including 600 Canadian companies. This is important to know, because when you look at the profile of those 2,900 public companies around the world, and indeed the 600 Canadian companies, many of these companies are Canadian banks, Canadian financial institutions, the kind of bedrock companies that are making up the basis of the CPP. So it's interesting, as we have had this discussion, that all the major public pension plans—CPP, OMERS, and I'm very familiar with the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, because my wife, Karan, is part of that plan. When you read the profiles of what OMERS invests the money in for the security of future benefit streams, and indeed the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, they are all invested in private sector entities, to look at the returns. So you can't really divide—when you talk about a purely public pension plan, the basis of the foundation of that pension plan is indeed the investments that are made in a wide variety of private sector companies. We all know, and it's a common joke with the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, that they own a majority share of the Maple Leaf or Air Canada entertainment centre that covers the Toronto Maple Leafs, the Raptors and several other organizations, and they have used those dollars through the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan to invest not only in entities here in Canada and North America, but indeed throughout the world. When you look at the profile of OMERS or CPP that I just talked about, that certainly indicates where they make their investments, where they're getting their returns, and those pension plans are effectively managed by individuals who have demonstrated profound expertise in this field.

So at the end of the day, I think this motion that's been put forward today is very important in the evolution of the debate that we are having in this country and indeed in this province. From that perspective, this is a debate, I believe, that needs to be held, a debate that should be held in all of the constituencies across this province. I know that many members have certainly taken the time to have round tables in their communities to bring forward people who have knowledge in the pension field to look at ways that we can really guarantee, on a goforward basis, providing income streams for individuals who are working hard each and every day to make Ontario the place it is, which is a great place to live, work and play.

1730

The fundamental question becomes: How do we get there? What components will make up this pension? We have this motion in front of us today that sees a total reliance, I believe, on a public sector solution. I happen to think there's another solution, more of a hybrid solution, that will take the form of a pan-Canadian agreement. The expansion of the CPP, I think, has some merit, but we may look at some other models that we can take together. For example, there are ways that you can amalgamate a number of small employers into a pension plan and substantially reduce the administrative costs, which would be handled through a larger critical mass of people coming together.

I think there are real opportunities as we move down the road. I certainly commend the third party for initiating this debate. It's a debate that all members of this House should be thoroughly engaged in, because it's about the future.

I heard a member talk about being part of the early part of the baby boom generation. I'm at the other end of the baby boom generation. We need to start a discussion throughout this province about the notion to increase savings. It's something that I take the time to talk to my children about—they are 11 and 12. As a society, we must put more emphasis on creating more savings. As time goes by, we'll eventually hit those retirement years, and there is a fundamental need to start the planning early for those retirement days.

With those comments, I know my colleague from Pickering-Scarborough East, an expert on pensions, will want to say a few words on this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: If I were to be watching the clock, I believe that the third party has some time left. I can appreciate, since it's their opposition day motion, that they would want the opportunity to try to wrap up the debate, so I appreciate the opportunity to continue the debate, following the member from Peterborough, in spite of the fact that we sit on the same side of the House, on the government side.

I think this is an opportunity for us. We dealt with a pension bill recently, and as we left that, some of us who were engaged in that process were saying that pension bills aren't necessarily the most exciting things to be talking about. But this motion gives us an opportunity in this place yet again to talk about retirement and income security. It gives us a chance to talk about pensions

generally, about strategies to ensure that people have opportunities, whether it be through their own savings, through government systems or through workplace initiatives, to be able to plan for or to at least have some element of security when they leave the workforce. I think it has been an opportunity for each of us, those all around this place today, to speak to those matters in a more generalized fashion than we would if we were speaking specifically to a bill.

I want to pick up, in part, where the member from Ottawa West-Nepean left off when he made some comments on this opposition day motion, by speaking to the questions that have been asked of the Premier of late and the Premier's generalized response to those.

I want to start by saying that I heard the Premier, when questions were asked, first complimenting the third party and its leader for taking a substantive interest in matters of pension, in matters of strategy to provide for retirement income security. He complimented them on the work they have done and the thought they have put into the processes they've been involved with. We also heard him saying, as the member from Ottawa West-Nepean was saying, that he would not be supporting this particular opposition day motion—one has to recognize it from this side of the House as an opposition day motion—and set some reasons out in the limited amount of time that he had to do that.

I would like to say what I've heard him saying of late as the Premier and as the leader of our party about the need to have this dialogue continue, not only in this place but across this nation, led by the federal government, obviously in that context, but participated in by the Council of the Federation, the Premiers and the finance ministers or those ministers who may have responsibilities for pensions who may not be finance ministers in this country, because there are some other jurisdictions where I understand it's not their finance ministers who have that particular portfolio, the point being that the dialogue or the discussion has to be one on a scope and scale that go beyond an individual province.

We've talked a lot about pensions and retirement income security, or retirement income adequacy, as another descriptor. Our finance minister, the Honourable Dwight Duncan, spoke to this matter numerous times. I had the opportunity, as recently or as far back, depending on how one looks at this discussion, to attend a meeting last summer in Calgary with Ted Menzies, the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance federally, Jim Flaherty, who was leading a process at that time engaging some of the provinces—because not everybody at that stage was yet at the table—to begin to have or continue some preliminary discussion around retirement income adequacy. As part of that, there were strategies set out to acquire information, to have some research papers done. Jack Mintz from the University of Calgary was kind of leading that process from the standpoint of bringing together some papers and discussion which the finance ministers had a chance to have submitted and review. That dialogue is continuing.

I have personally had the opportunity to participate recently in a couple of venues, one of which involved the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress here in Toronto, a one-day workshop that they were hosting. Mr. Tabuns from the riding of Toronto-Danforth was present and participating, I believe, during the day in that particular forum. There was an opportunity for us to talk about retirement income adequacy, about pension strategies. A lot of the focus that day, I would think, was on the issue of the CPP and some of the initiatives in that regard, or those who have positions on the CPP, about it being enhanced or even doubled to provide for up to 50% of what might be the standardized income one would see today in the industrial income levels. That's one position that's out there. That was an interesting forum.

What it led me to see was that there are a lot of folks—and additionally those in this place—who are taking a very active interest in organizing venues for the opportunity for various sectors to put on the table matters of interest and concern to them about retirement income adequacy.

There are a number of options that exist. As we speak about this particular motion, it really narrows the focus down to an Ontario pension plan in the workplace, not unlike, to some extent, the CPP, but with lots of nuances. But there are other elements of the broader retirement income adequacy issue that we need to continue to put on the table during the debates that we're having.

There are the basic foundations—and I believe the member from Peterborough was talking about this earlier on in his comments—of old age security: that as a resident and as a citizen of this country, we have some entitlement, at the age of 65, to be provided some very, very modest income security through the old age system. In addition to that, there's the guaranteed income supplement for those in the lowest economic echelon of our seniors' community to supplement that old age security system if they have no other income availability.

Frankly, what that has done over the years is that it has taken out of the numbers of those in poverty large numbers of seniors, particularly senior women. People don't recognize that. Over the last number of years, that has changed, where decades ago, a couple of generations ago, probably the largest number or a large number of those in poverty were senior women who didn't have any income, who didn't have old age security, when there was no guaranteed income supplement, when their spouses may not have had any type of workplace pension, and if they did, it probably ended with their passing, and many of those women would have lived longer than their husbands.

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So the pure public system, the old age security system and the guaranteed income system, has provided a basic level of income that has assisted in shifting that poverty line or assisted those in poverty to move out of that or at least to the very margins of it.

In addition to that, the Canada pension plan, which really is a workplace pension, has added an element on a national level that has supported and supplemented the old age security system, which provides those who are in the workplace, over time, the opportunity on retirement—the member from Thornhill spoke to the fact that he has chosen at this time to collect that pension at an earlier stage than the normal kind of 65, which is sort of the threshold, and he's done that recognizing that he's taking it at a reduced amount. It's a recognition that he'll collect it, as others do, at an earlier age than 65, but they'll take a lesser amount to do that at that point in time because they make choices, many of those because they have moved into retirement at an earlier age than 65 and they find the CPP helps to supplement what might otherwise be a fairly modest pension, or they may not even be eligible yet for a workplace pension, if they have

I know that my wife, who retired some two or three years ago, will probably take her CPP at 60 or 61, in the next year or so, at a reduced amount as well, because it will make sense for her to do that to supplement the pension she has at that point in time.

There are options with things like workplace pensions that are supported by employers and supported obviously by the employee over periods of time at a national scale. So there's good reason to have a discussion about the Canada pension plan and what that might offer and whether or not an enhancement to that is a good idea and whether that enhancement should be a mandatory enhancement or whether there's some mechanism to make it a more voluntary structure and system. Those are among the kinds of discussions we need to continue having.

We have lots of discussions in this place about whether or not the defined benefit plans are the answer in the employment system or whether defined contribution plans also play a part. Here in this place, those of us who are elected to this place no longer have defined benefit plans. Those were abandoned some 10 or 12 years ago now. It's almost 15 years ago now: 1995-96. Now, at this stage, we have defined contribution plans-modest as they are, but nonetheless, those of us in this place do have a fairly modest pension plan under defined contribution strategies. So there are workplace plans that differ—they differ even in this place over time, but certainly differ in differing workplaces, and also differ as to how the contributions are made to those, whether the employee is a direct contributor, whether it's an employer-only contributed plan-and we know some of the challenges that exist in those structures. We saw that in the automotive sector, as an example, where the great liabilities that General Motors were facing when they were near going under-and without government support, they may very well have—had a lot to do with the fact that they were providing the full funding, for all practical purposes, for the pension systems that existed

So there's lots of discussion that is yet necessary for us to have in this province—and, I would suggest, in this country—before we land on solutions. I haven't even had the opportunity to talk about the role of private savings, and those private savings can consist of anything, such as our RRSPs, that provide for tax deferral. They're not tax avoidance, but they allow you, at a time with maybe higher income in your working career, to set some money aside in savings and get some tax benefit for that and, ideally, draw that money down in your retirement years when your income is less and you're not paying as much tax on it. So you get a little bit of a benefit by saving it now. That's the idea of having RRSPs. We've seen the threshold, the amounts of those, increase over the years to the point where one can now put in a more substantive amount, if they have those monies available to them.

In addition to that, we have, as I think members opposite talked about, the additional personal responsibilities, the very private responsibilities, and that's independent savings without tax deferrals, without being in a pension plan, without being part of an old age security system: the very personal savings and assets that one might build up in their lifetime that they can draw on.

So retirement income adequacy and retirement income security are important matters for us to be discussing here. This opposition day motion, I think, is well thought out and presented. The Premier said early on, when he was asked about this, that he appreciates the time they've taken, the energy they have put into this process, but he won't be supporting it, nor will I be supporting this motion today.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais ajouter quelques commentaires face au débat qui a eu lieu cet après-midi.

Dans un premier temps, je veux que les gens comprennent bien que le plan que les néo-démocrates mettent de l'avant, c'est un plan qui permet aux deux tiers des travailleurs et des travailleuses de l'Ontario de finalement avoir un petit peu de sécurité financière lorsqu'ils prennent leur retraite pour leur permettre de vivre avec dignité et respect. Il n'y a personne qui va se mettre riche avec ça, mais on ajoute une sécurité—une sécurité qui permet que si tu planifies bien tes finances, tu vas pouvoir vivre avec dignité et respect chez toi.

Ce qu'on veut, c'est un plan public. C'est un plan public qui va permettre à tous les travailleurs de contribuer, et leurs employeurs vont contribuer une partie identique. Tout ça sera mis ensemble pour qu'une fois que la personne prend sa retraite et commence à retirer, pour un travailleur ou une travailleuse qui se trouve au maximum, on parle d'entre 650 \$ et 700 \$ de plus par mois : un montant fixe sur lequel tu peux budgéter, un montant fixe auquel tu peux te fier.

Quand j'entends les gens dire que le régime enregistré d'épargne-retraite est la façon de le faire, saviez-vous que si vous voulez, disons, 25 000 \$ par année de revenus lorsque vous serez à votre retraite, vous devez avoir un demi-million en banque—un demi-million en banque, quand la plupart des gens ont environ 60 000 \$ dans leur RÉER?

My colleague is asking: Did you know that, through an RRSP, if you want to retire with about \$25,000 a year, you need to have 20 times that amount? You need to have half a million dollars in your RRSP to be able to retire with a \$25,000-a-year income. This is not realistic. The average Ontarian manages to save \$60,000 in their RRSP. There is a big gap between half a million dollars and \$60,000, so when I hear the opposition say that this is the way to go, I say that this is the way to go to poverty.

Quand on parle de choix, il faut que ça soit un choix éclairé. Le choix de vivre dans la pauvreté n'est pas un choix. Le choix de continuer à donner 11,2 milliards de dollars à ceux qui gèrent les fonds de pension individuels n'est pas un choix non plus. C'est du vol. Avoir un plan de pension public nous permet, dans un premier temps, de récupérer 8,4 milliards de dollars qui sont dépensés en ce moment pour les frais administratifs des RÉER. Ça permet également d'avoir un plan sur lequel tu n'es pas à la merci des marchés. Tu sais exactement combien tu vas recevoir à tous les mois.

Est-ce que ça serait bien d'avoir quelque chose du côté fédéral à la grandeur du Canada? Certainement. On appuie ce qui se fait avec le Congrès du travail du Canada, mais ça n'empêche que l'Ontario a un rôle à jouer. Il y a trop de travailleurs, deux travailleurs sur trois—66 % des travailleurs et travailleuses en Ontario n'ont pas de plan de pension, n'auront pas de sécurité financière pendant leurs années de retraite.

Ce n'est pas acceptable, et c'est à nous aujourd'hui de changer ça. Comme les gens qui sont venus avant nous, qui ont mis sur pied medicare, qui ont mis sur pied le plan de pension fédéral, qui ont mis sur pied les programmes sociaux dont on est tellement fiers, on a la chance ici aujourd'hui en Ontario de faire la même chose: de mettre un nouveau plan de pension ontarien qui deviendra une maille de notre système social dont nous pourrons tous être fiers et, en même temps, de permettre à tous les travailleurs et travailleuses de l'Ontario de se préparer pour une retraite avec une sécurité financière.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye." All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay." In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell. *The division bells rang from 1750 to 1800.*

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

Ayes

Bisson, Gilles Gélinas, France Hampton, Howard Horwath, Andrea Kormos, Peter Marchese, Rosario Miller, Paul Prue, Michael Tabuns, Peter

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): All those opposed to the motion will please rise.

Nays

Albanese, Laura Arthurs, Wayne Balkissoon, Bas Barrett, Toby Berardinetti, Lorenzo Brown, Michael A. Brownell, Jim Cansfield, Donna H. Carroll, Aileen Chan, Michael Chiarelli, Bob Colle, Mike Craitor, Kim Crozier, Bruce Delaney, Bob Dhillon, Vic Dombrowsky, Leona

Duguid, Brad Gerretsen, John Gravelle, Michael Hoskins, Eric Hoy, Pat Jeffrey, Linda Johnson, Rick Kular, Kuldip Lalonde, Jean-Marc Leal, Jeff Levac, Dave Mangat, Amrit McMeekin, Ted McNeely, Phil Meilleur, Madeleine Miller, Norm

Milloy, John

Mitchell, Carol Naqvi, Yasir O'Toole, John Orazietti. David Pendergast, Leeanna Pupatello, Sandra Qaadri, Shafiq Ramal, Khalil Ramsay, David Rinaldi, Lou Ruprecht, Tony Sandals, Liz Shurman, Peter Smith, Monique Sorbara, Greg Van Bommel, Maria Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 9; the nays are 51.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

INJURED WORKERS

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Labour. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

The member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: Last week, I asked the Minister of Labour a straightforward question, one designed to get to the bottom of a very troubling situation for injured workers in the labour market re-entry program. It's hard enough being an injured worker, which is often a lifealtering experience, but it's something with which the WSIB should be helping the injured worker, not causing roadblocks and pitfalls. Sadly, we know that when an injured worker is ready to re-enter the workforce and needs to be retrained, the worst days could just be starting.

Last week, I asked the minister a simple question: "How does the WSIB determine which career colleges an injured worker will be sent to? The minister decided to completely ignore the question and embark on an election-style rant, with statistics aimed for quick sound bites. He also fell into what has become the SOP, the standard operating procedure, for responding to questions and attack the actions of the previous government, none of which had any relationship to the simple question I asked.

I tried again to get an answer to a very serious situation for injured workers. I asked the question:

"We have many emails from injured workers who have been duped by the system into taking training that leads nowhere. They're injured workers who have been sent to private career colleges by the WSIB, who attend in good faith only to discover, upon completing their course, that that private career college is not accredited, cannot issue a diploma and has been a complete and utter waste of their time and public money. Then, imagine, despite being told about the unaccredited private career college rip-off, the WSIB cuts off the injured workers, claiming that they have been retrained and must now find new work."

I asked the minister: "What on earth is going on here? How can such a monumental mistake keep happening over and over again?"

Rather than expressing shock, the outrage that one should expect upon being made aware of such a situation, the minister went into his typical dodge, weave and redirecting of responsibility that we so often witness during question period. I expected to hear that the minister was shocked, appalled and would ensure an immediate investigation into such a complete waste of public money; and if not, an apology to injured workers who have fallen victim to this scandal. It was all so telling that the minister had not called for a complete stop to the practice while the new president of the WSIB is looking at this very closely.

The positive outcomes that injured workers should expect is employment in a fulfilling career, at or as near to the salary level as their pre-injury career as possible, not at an entry-level job which pays significantly less than the injured worker previously earned.

Based on the minister's response to my question, it appears that he knew there was a problem, a significant problem, but had not called for a halt to the practice while the system was being looked at by the new president. That is completely unacceptable.

This issue is not going away, and I intend to grill the minister until I'm convinced that this practice has ceased completely. I will pursue this minister and this government on the issues that so significantly affect Ontarians. Not only will we ask hard questions, but we will demand proper answers.

I don't care if I have to call for a late show every time I deal with the Ministry of Labour and I don't get an answer. I will. If I don't get actual answers to my questions, I'll have a date with my critic portfolio ministers every Tuesday and Wednesday at 6 p.m. I'll be seeing them, because it's time—in the two and a half years that I've stood up in this House and asked the labour minister and the former labour minister questions, I've gotten the runaround. I don't get direct answers. I don't even get a response outside of the House afterwards. I don't even get a call to my office with the answer. They dismiss it. They don't seem to acknowledge our questions. They don't want to respond. So we have to force them into these types of late night sittings to get them to answer simple questions that the workers of this province deserve.

The workers of this province deserve to know where the ministry stands on injured workers, experience rating and deeming. For three years, I've been after them to do something about this. The minister stands up in this House week after week and talks about safety and health rather than talk about the questions. He also admitted that the experience rating program is problematic, the deeming program is problematic, and the treatment of injured workers is problematic. Has he done anything? No. He just keeps referring to something else, diverting, avoiding it.

We stand down here on University Avenue every year and ask the same questions and get no answers. It's about time we did.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The parliamentary assistant, the member for Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: The member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek has expressed dissatisfaction with the Minister of Labour's response to his question during last Wednesday's question period. As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour, I welcome this opportunity to speak to this issue. It allows me to reiterate the minister's response that the Ministry of Labour and the WSIB are working hard to assist our injured workers.

Everyone agrees that it is vital that injured workers get back to work as soon as they safely can. This is because a job is more than just a paycheque; it's a source of personal pride and dignity. That's why the WSIB has its labour market re-entry program, which helps injured workers receive training for a new job that is right for them after recovering from a workplace injury.

For over a decade, the WSIB has provided vocational retraining services to workers in situations where they're having trouble being re-employed by their employer because of the nature of their injury, or their employer is not able to arrange for work that is consistent with the worker's functional abilities and that restores the worker's pre-injury earnings.

Over the years, there have been many successes with our LMR program. One of the program's graduates, Estelle Caines, is a newly appointed member of the WSIB's board of directors. Ms. Caines worked as a hoist operator for 17 years before a workplace injury prevented her from continuing. Through the WSIB's LMR program, she returned to school and obtained a bachelor of arts in psychology and conflict resolution studies, along with an applied counselling certificate. Since graduating in 2002, Ms. Caines has been working as the director of access services for Integrated Services Northwest, a program run by the Lake of the Woods Child Development Centre. As an injured worker who has been through

the WSIB system, she brings a unique perspective to the board and the WSIB as an organization, understanding first-hand the needs and concerns of injured workers.

There are countless other success stories which highlight how this program has been critical to the lives of injured workers. That said, the WSIB is striving to improve the program. That is why the WSIB has been working hard to make the LMR program more accountable, efficient and relevant to the needs of injured workers in Ontario. In fact, the board just recently concluded a value-for-money audit of this program. The results and recommendations made in the audit, which are available on the WSIB website, offer excellent direction for the WSIB moving forward. The board has already started planning implementation of these recommendations, and will be consulting with stakeholders throughout the process.

In regard to the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek's question about non-registered private career colleges, as he is well aware, this is an issue that the WSIB has looked at closely. This issue was also addressed in the 2009 value-for-money audit. As a result of the audit's recommendations, the WSIB will only use private career colleges that are registered under the Private Career Colleges Act and that are in good standing with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

The Minister of Labour is pleased that the WSIB has taken concrete steps in addressing this issue, and he is confident about the changes and the direction in which the board is heading.

I understand that the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek has been in contact with the WSIB on this and other issues. On behalf of the minister, I encourage him to contact the WSIB again if he has any more questions or suggestions. They will be more than willing to speak with him about his questions or concerns.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that we all are conscious of the fact that injured workers face significant systemic barriers in their efforts to return to work and achieve their full earning potential. That is why we are all working together to significantly improve work reintegration outcomes.

I want to assure everyone in this House, on behalf of the minister, that the Ministry of Labour and the WSIB remain committed to supporting Ontario injured workers in every way they can.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1814.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

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Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
		Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma-Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham-Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-	
	Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
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Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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		Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
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		Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances

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Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Axad es l'es sonsairmes
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby-Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East-Cooksville / Mississauga-Est-Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
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Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora-Rainy River	, and a second of the second o
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	r opposition criticals
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
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Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges-Markham	progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
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Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin-Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket-Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House I ander / I ander marlamentains de mortine
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea-Gore-Malton	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean-Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
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Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	
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		Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	•
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East-Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est-Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
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Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

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Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
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Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
a minps, 11on., D non. Gerry (D1D)	Source of the second se	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
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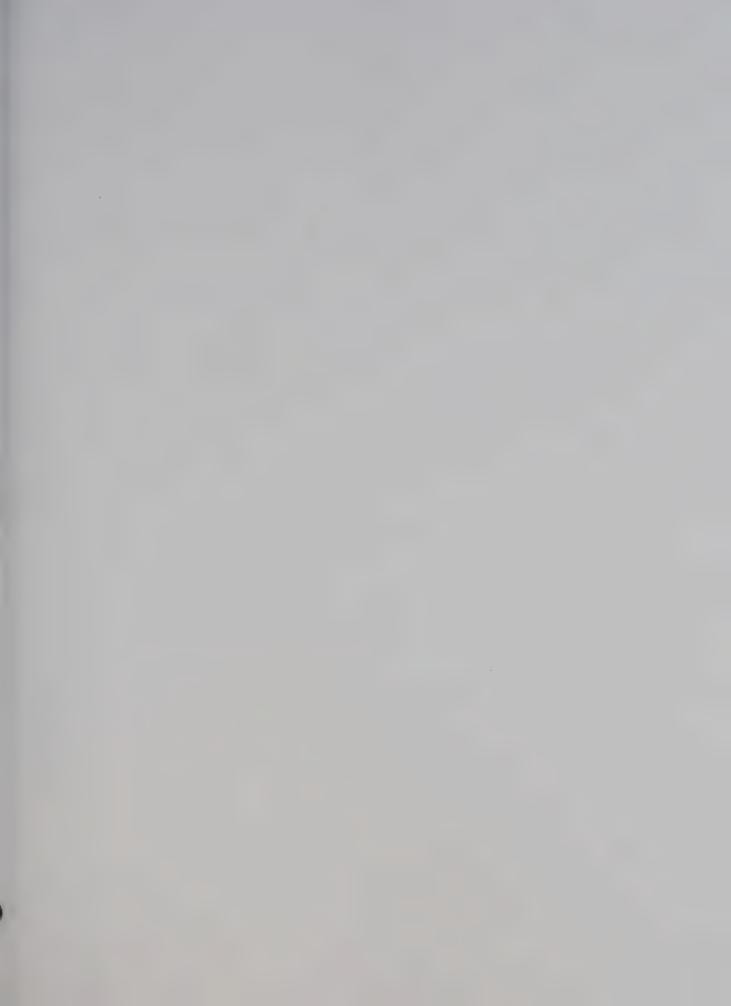
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Deuxième session, 39^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 12 May 2010



Mercredi 12 mai 2010



Speaker Honourable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 12 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 12 mai 2010

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for personal thought and inner reflection.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

EXCELLENT CARE FOR ALL ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR L'EXCELLENCE DES SOINS POUR TOUS

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 11, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 46, An Act respecting the care provided by health care organizations / Projet de loi 46, Loi relative aux soins fournis par les organismes de soins de santé.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very pleased to speak to second reading of the government's proposed bill, the Excellent Care for All Act. I strongly believe that this piece of legislation is essential in moving the health system forward to deliver the kind of quality care that Ontarians need and deserve.

We talk a lot about "quality care," but what do those words really mean? They mean being able to count on getting the highest standard of care no matter where in the province you live or get care. They mean being assured that the care you receive is based on the best and most up-to-date evidence that is shown to improve outcomes for patients. And for taxpayers—and we're all taxpayers—they mean having confidence that every dollar spent on health care actually improves outcomes for patients.

We have to examine everything that is being done in health care through this lens of quality. That's my job as health minister. For example, why are the majority of bone mineral density tests, used to detect and diagnose osteoporosis, being performed on low-risk women between the ages of 45 and 64, while at the same time only a minority of Ontarians with osteoporosis who are at high risk have their bone mineral density tested? Does this represent quality? Does this represent value?

Another example: There are patients receiving preoperative testing before some elective surgeries, tests where there is no evidence that shows a clinical benefit. But at the same time, many Ontarians with diabetes and other chronic diseases are still not receiving all the care that is recommended by clinical guidelines. When chronic diseases are not managed, people often get sicker and may end up in a hospital emergency room.

Failing to provide the best quality and a consistent level of care across the board ends up being more costly to the patient and to the health care system. We have an obligation to the people of Ontario to ensure that we are building a quality and sustainable health care system that will continue to deliver that care for decades to come. I believe the Excellent Care for All Act, if passed, will do just that.

The proposed legislation, along with complementary initiatives, will help develop a culture of quality where everyone working in the health care system, from the CEO to the front lines, is focused on quality improvement: getting better at what they do, getting better at how they deliver care, getting better at improving patient outcomes and getting better at creating quality and value within the health system.

I want to make it clear that hospitals are just a starting point, although they're a very important starting point. Our government's vision is much broader. Ultimately, quality improvement has to be applied to all aspects of the health care system. Ontarians should be able to expect high quality and value whether they're receiving care in a hospital, in the community or within their own home. Quality must cut across the entire continuum of care. But as I said, hospitals are the important starting point.

Today, I'm asking my honourable colleagues to support this bill. This bill is based on the following four principles: that care must be organized around the patient to support his or her health; that continuous quality improvement is a critical goal; that payment, policy and planning must support both quality and the efficient use of resources; and finally, that quality care must be supported by the very best evidence and standards of care.

Health care organizations, beginning with hospitals, would all have interprofessional quality committees that would report directly to the board of directors on quality-related issues. These quality committees would create a focal point in hospitals around improvements that support better patient care.

Every organization would have quality improvement plans publicly posted. This will support hospitals in consciously pointing out ways that they're going to get better at what they do. It would also inform patients, families and the community about what hospitals are doing to improve the quality of care.

0910

Executive compensation would be linked to the achievement of outcomes identified in those plans. This will bring about a top-down focus on quality that would permeate the organization and also drive better patient care. It's not just about developing a quality improvement plan; it's about holding hospital leadership accountable for delivering on the plan.

There would be a patient relations process to address complaints and concerns, and regular patient, client and caregiver surveys with publicly posted results. The results of these surveys would be used to inform the annual quality improvement plans. It would give patients and their families, as well as hospital employees, greater input into shaping quality improvements in hospitals. Patients will be very much a part of this quality improvement dialogue, because for our government it all begins and ends with the patient, and there are many, many committed health professionals in Ontario who feel the same way.

I want to share with you an example of health care organizations focusing on specific quality improvement initiatives to make things better for their patients. The Humber River Regional Hospital and North York General Hospital partnered with a number of long-term-care homes to create a nurse-led outreach team that provides support, education and primary care services to those participating long-term-care homes. This has prevented many unnecessary transfers to an emergency room. Fifty per cent of the people assessed by the team would typically have been sent to the hospital in the past.

I could go on; the examples abound. But what has been lacking is across-the-board consistency, a health care culture where quality and value are absolutely integral parts of everyone's job. As a way to expand consistent quality throughout the system, the proposed bill also expands the mandate of the Ontario Health Quality Council. It would enable the council to provide recommendations on clinical practice guidelines for services delivered by health care providers. The council would also make recommendations on possible changes to the way health care is covered and paid for. This would help ensure that future investments in health care get results and improve patient health.

We must act, Speaker. The health care numbers tell a vivid story. I know you've heard them in the House before, but I think they bear repeating. They underscore the challenge that is at hand and the imperative of acting now. Just 20 years ago, 32 cents—about a third—of every government program dollar was spent on health care. Today it's 46 cents, or closing in on half. If we continue to do what we are doing and don't make the changes that are necessary, we could be at 70% of our overall government budget in just 12 years.

The health care system is very important to Ontarians and, I know, to every member of this House. It touches all of us and everyone who is most dear to us. But we cannot continue to increase funding at a rate that will crowd out other government priorities. We still need to pay for education for our kids. We still need to build a

strong social safety net. We need to protect our environment, and we need to build our infrastructure. We need to face this health care challenge head-on.

When some people hear the word "affordability," they think "restraint" and "cutbacks." But quality doesn't mean "more expensive." In fact, it is waste and inefficiency and poor quality that are expensive. Quality and sustainability go hand in hand. This legislation is about focusing on patients, focusing on quality, focusing on best practices, focusing on delivering value for every dollar we spend on health care.

I believe that the Excellent Care for All Act is a necessary first step in achieving all these imperatives. I urge my colleagues from all parties to support this legislation. The future quality and sustainability of health care in Ontario depend upon it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Obviously health care is a very important issue for all members of this Legislature. But I'd like to point out that although we are in support of openness, transparency and accountability in the health care system, and have been from day one, we find it quite odd that a few instances have occurred where the government is actually not in line with our thinking on openness, transparency and accountability.

I think back to just last Thursday, when the government had the opportunity to vote for the truth-in-government bill that I put forward. The Truth in Government Act would have allowed freedom of information requests to go to hospitals, which the Ontario Hospital Association itself had supported.

I think back to the \$1-billion eHealth boondoggle. We have been calling, in fact as late as yesterday in committee, for a public inquiry into that lost-health-care dollar disaster presided over by this government.

Finally, we think of the health tax, where Ontarians are now paying as much as \$900 per year that goes into general revenue, the sewer fund, rather than directly into our hospitals. There needs to be some accountability there

But that's not it. Right now we have a major issue in Ontario with drug pricing, drug wars and the combative attitude from the government with our local neighbourhood pharmacists. I must say that I'm very impressed with Kim Craitor, the Liberal MPP who has taken the side of the Progressive Conservative Party and called on the McGuinty Liberals to go back to the table with the pharmacists, as we have been saying. Don't demonize them. And he's done this today when they protested his office. This was in the Welland Tribune. Again, he has come out in support of the PC position, that they need to go back to the drawing board because they have been unaccountable to not only our local pharmacists but to our seniors, to our young families, to the people who require our pharmacists.

They have a lot to answer for. Why did they vote down truth in government? Why aren't they disclosing the health tax? Why aren't they doing any health—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. The member for Welland.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'm here with my colleague from the riding of Toronto-Danforth, and both of us listened carefully to the minister. We find it remarkable that the Minister of Health, in brief but eloquent comments, would not have addressed this morning the closure of the emergency rooms in Fort Erie and Port Colborne. We know what the member for Niagara Falls has to say about those, a member of the minister's backbench. We know that the member for Niagara Falls, Mr. Craitor, bemoans and indeed objects vigorously and rejects the cruel and deadly closure of emergency rooms in Fort Erie and Port Colborne.

We find it remarkable that the minister, in her brief but eloquent address this morning, could have omitted the dissension in her own ranks around their ill-conceived and vicious attack on small-town pharmacists. Oh, the big-box pharmacies will do quite well, thank you, at the end of the day. Mr. Peterson's stock values will be restored. He knows that and so does the minister. Nobody has to shed any tears for the board of directors of Shoppers Drug Mart or Pharma Plus. But I'm worried about the Donnie Edwardses of Port Colborne, small-town pharmacists who are under pressure from the big-box stores and for whom this most recent attack by this government could be, and probably will be, the final blow.

You see, once again the member from Niagara Falls knows that his government is wrong. He said so in the press. I came to the Legislature this morning with copies of the Welland Tribune article. It was also published in the Niagara Falls Review. "Kim Craitor Gives His Support" to pharmacy students and condemns his government's attack on small-town pharmacies—strange, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I am very happy to provide a couple of comments on the bill and on the input by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The minister has quite clearly stated that this bill is trying to give the taxpayer value for their investments in our health care system, and we're moving towards what we call best practices. In the bill itself, it will provide that future services will depend on clinical practice guidelines that are much improved.

Many of us will remember, prior to this government getting elected, that the previous government went on a cost-cutting measure to improve health care and reduce costs. It didn't work. Our government, since it has been elected, has invested significantly in the health care system. What we're doing now is, after we have provided all the resources and the investments in the system, we're looking for value, and this is what this bill is all about. Now that we've got the system to where it is, we can ask those that are involved in the system to ensure that all future investments are dependent on improved health care for the taxpayers of Ontario.

If you look at the bill carefully, you will see that on the patient relations side there are improvements, there are key indicators that the public will be aware of, there is a patient-value system that has to be made public and the performance of the hospital has to be made public. All of us will remember the wait-time strategies of this government. When it was made public and posted on websites, hospitals improved, and this bill will do exactly the same in terms of the improvements in clinical practices and patient care.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I commend the Minister of Health for doing the best she can with what she's got, and I suspect during Ontario—this is Nursing Week in Ontario. I know I'll be at two hospitals this week; I'll be at the mental health facility Ontario Shores as well as at Uxbridge hospital, which is, like many hospitals, being challenged in terms of not enough money. Of course, the government blames the LHINs and the LHINs say, "Well, we have a mandate to rationalize," which means cut, basically.

Here's the deal, though. I look across the room here and I see Lou Rinaldi from Northumberland Hills. You should speak up for your hospital. They're laying nurses off there. And Jeff Leal here, from Peterborough Regional Health Centre. There are two Liberal members sitting here, their hospitals—they're closing half of the Peterborough hospital, closing it. He should be standing in his place outraged. And the member Lou Rinaldi from Northumberland Hills, I can't believe it. You should work with your constituents, Lou. All politics is local. Get on the game.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: You closed hospitals.

Mr. John O'Toole: Look, we opened that hospital when we were government, and Port Hope and Port Colborne. I am so shocked, disappointed and saddened by this process.

I often think of the presentation made to the finance committee by a young pharmacist who my wife taught in grade 1, and now he owns a pharmacy in Minden, Peter Meraw. He made an impassioned, non-partisan—politics has nothing to do with it. He's providing care to elderly, frail seniors. He's giving them advice that arguably could be life-saving. What are they doing? They're strangling them. They're putting them out of business. They're actually silencing them by cutting out any of the possibilities of small hospitals in rural Ontario. Under this government it's dark days.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The minister has up to two minutes to respond.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm delighted to have the opportunity to respond. I have to say that it was odd for me to hear three members of the two parties opposite speak but not speak to this bill. I can only assume, because they have nothing to say about this bill, that they are in fact supportive of the initiatives that we are prepared to take to improve the quality of our health care system and improve the value for money that people get in the health care system.

I'm very proud of what our health care system has accomplished, the people who work every day in our health care system, but we need to do even better. This legislation will put in place the structure that will focus the attention of people across this province on getting better-quality care. What that means is that people will be able to access the same excellent quality no matter where they go in this province. It means that Ontario's health care system will continue to get better, year over year. We've made some remarkable improvements in our health care system. We've addressed safety issues. We have been able to significantly lower rates of infection and increase rates of compliance on hand hygiene. Our hospitals and our health care organizations are safer and better now, today, than they probably have ever been, but we know we can do better.

What this legislation does, and I can only assume it's being supported by all parties in this Legislature, is continue to focus our health care system on getting better and on getting stronger. That's what we need to do in order to have a health care system that will be there not just for us, but for generations to come.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Do any members wish to speak? If not, Ms. Smith has moved second reading of Bill 46. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye." All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This vote will be taken after question period this morning.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Orders of the day?

Hon. John Wilkinson: No further business.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): There being no further business, this House will be in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 0924 to 1030. Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We'll stop the clock. Would you like to take that call right now? We'll gladly let you take the call. That must be a very important call, and we'll allow it to be used.

WEARING OF CARNATIONS

Mr. John O'Toole: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would seek unanimous consent today for people to wear the boutonniere carnation in recognition of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, who are with us today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CHAMBER

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take a moment to advise all members that certain of their colleagues are today participating in the Canadian Paraplegic Association of Ontario's Chair-Leaders event. To increase awareness of the importance of accessibility, these members are challenged to spend their workday in wheelchairs.

I want to note, for the information of the House, that while we do have the capability to install ramps in the chamber which facilitate access to the front tier of member seating, they are intended for longer-term requirements of a disabled member, which we have done in the past. For today, the ramps have not been installed, and the participating members will take their seats as usual.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. John O'Toole: In recognition of the MS Society I would like to introduce, in the visitors' gallery, Kim Steele and Natasha Mistry from the MS Society, seated in our gallery here this morning. Welcome.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I would like to introduce to the House today guests from the Canadian Paraplegic Association of Ontario, who are here for their Chair-Leaders initiative, as the Speaker mentioned. Chair-Leaders is an awareness-raising event that highlights the need for an accessible Ontario for all. With us today, sitting in the Speaker's gallery, are executive director Bill Adair, Pamela Quirk, Linda Staples, Gillian Lynne-Davies, Radka Poliakova and Andrea Ronan.

I also remind the members that there is a lunch reception today after question period in room 228.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to extend a special welcome to the Legislature today to Mr. Richard Rowe, Mrs. Linda Rowe and their children Raymond and Lindsay, who are here to observe question period, to have lunch with an MPP and to observe how effective this place really can be.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: It is my pleasure to introduce today some 60 students who are part of the minister's student advisory council. This is a new crop of students on the council who are here today for a session. They're observing the Legislative Assembly this morning as part of their agenda today. It's good to have them here.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I apologize for a slightly longer introduction, and they're long medical terms.

I'd like to welcome my constituents Maureen Mac-Quarrie, Eleanor Johnston and Alison Rae who are here today with the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario and the Environmental Health Association of Ontario for International Awareness Day for myalgic encephalomyelitis chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities.

I'd also like to welcome representatives from nine different groups who provide support for those living with these conditions. The groups here today are: the Waterloo-Wellington ME Association; the Scarborough ME, FM and MCS support group; the Toronto, north Toronto, Mississauga and Brampton fibromyalgia support groups; the ME/FM Association of Peterborough and District;

and the Vaughan and the York region Fibromyalgia/CFS Wellness Support Group. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to acknowledge three of my constituents: Judy Derrett, who is from my riding of Durham. She's here with the chronic fatigue syndrome group, as well as Chrissy from Whitby and Lynn from Pickering.

Hon. Margarett R. Best: Over the past 40 years, Special Olympics has grown from a modest program serving local athletes to become the world's largest movement dedicated to promoting respect, acceptance, inclusion and human dignity for people with intellectual disabilities through sports. Special Olympics Ontario operates over 1,600 club programs in 17 official sports for children and adults. Today we welcome athletes and volunteers from Special Olympics Ontario to the Legislature. Welcome.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I would like to extend a warm welcome to two of my constituents: Karen and Fabio Rossetti, who are seated in the members' gallery. It's a very special day for them today as they watch their son, page Joshua Rossetti, fulfill his duties as page captain in the Legislature today. Welcome to you, and good luck to Joshua in his duties today.

Mr. Bill Mauro: Here today from my riding of Thunder Bay-Atikokan, as part of the minister's student advisory council, is Madison Alexandra Dyck from the Ecole Gron Morgan Public School.

Mr. John O'Toole: Again, I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park today the members of the Community Living Durham North group led by their treasurer, Jamie Ross; their president, Larry Leonard; and executive director, Glenn Taylor. Welcome to Queen's Park on Community Living Day that isn't being celebrated this year.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'd like to welcome, in the members' east gallery, Councillor Drew Dilkens from ward 1 in the city of Windsor.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to welcome the family of legislative page Nicole Pal from Ledbury school in my riding. She is also a page captain today. Her family is here: her mom, Liz Pal; her sister Danielle Pal, who's also the president of the student council at Ledbury school; and dad, Robert Pal. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'd like to welcome a member of the fibromyalgia association of Brampton visiting the Legislature today. Her name is Joanne Saraiva.

I'd also like to welcome high school students from Central Peel Secondary School who are on a tour today.

Mr. David Zimmer: I'd like to welcome Bill Greenhalgh, who is the chief executive officer, and other representatives from the Human Resources Professionals Association to Queen's Park today. It's the largest human resources professional organization in Canada, with 20,000 members. They're celebrating the 75th anniversary, and they're hosting a lovely reception today in room 228 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. All members are invited. I encourage you to attend. It's going to be a fabulous reception.

Mr. Steve Clark: I would like to introduce in the House today two municipal councillors from my riding from the township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, Mayor Frank Kinsella and Councillor Tom Lawler.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like to introduce this morning two Special Olympic athletes whom I met this morning: Alison Lang and Chris Innes.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I rise in the House to introduce to you James Noronah from the Special Olympics, and guests from my church, St. George's Church On-The-Hill. Thank you.

Mr. Dave Levac: I would like to introduce to the House anyone who hasn't been introduced.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is a pleasure for me to introduce Lori Levere, who is a public health nurse with Peel Public Health; Edith Kernerman, from the Newman Breastfeeding Clinic and also an international board-certified lactation consultant; Olga Jovkovic, who is manager of Healthy Families at Toronto Public Health; and Janet and Stan Zablocki. We also have Courtney Fairbrother-Davies and her seven-month-old cute little baby Molly; Camila Valente and her 12-month-old, Pedro, and grandma Christina Leal; and Gertrudes Chavez.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further introductions?

I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and page Emma Allen to welcome her mother, Lana Duncan, her sister Georgia Allen and her friend Alia Riza to the public galleries today.

I'd also like to introduce some guests here today from the Special Olympics, two special athletes that I had the opportunity to meet with this morning: Vincenzia Stalk and Ryan Colpitts. They were accompanied by Peter Seto and Norm King.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Premier. In a May 2009 report, KPMG Canada warned that the HST will add 8% to rents and leases, power bills, heat, temporary staff and medical supplies of doctors and other front-line health professionals. But doctors are insured with OHIP, so it will be Ontario patients who end up bearing the burden of your new tax on health care. So my question is, how will you do it? Through higher OHIP premiums, a hike in the so-called health care tax or more cuts to front-line health care?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that KPMG in fact supports the package of tax reforms that we put forward, including the HST. My honourable colleague knows that a report from the Conference Board of Canada was just released which specifically referenced our tax reforms and said that they were instrumental in ensuring that Ontario will be the fastest-growing economy in the country this coming year. There was also another report, put out on May 3 by TD Economics—it's called Innovate or Perish—that says, "The good news is that an extremely favourable environment for business investment and innovation is upon us once again.... This has been facilitated by lower corporate income tax rates, the elimination of capital taxes, and the harmonization of sales taxes in some provinces." Again, support from thoughtful groups is overwhelming when it comes to the tax reforms that we're putting forward to create more jobs for Ontario families.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: The bad news is that this has clearly not been thought through with respect to health care professionals, because they're ineligible to claim input tax credits for their business purchases. And because the services they provide are exempt from HST, health professionals and care facilities cannot claim the 8% they pay for hydro, office expenses and medical supplies on their tax returns. That means either they or the taxpayers have to eat the cost of the HST. How many millions of dollars will doctors and hospitals pay for HST on overhead rather than the money going to front-line health care?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm a little bit confused, but it appears to be this is an argument in favour of the HST. Apparently there is a group, according to my honourable colleague, that is not going to benefit from the HST. She's arguing they ought to be allowed to benefit from the HST. Perhaps it's not unusual because as members of the Conservative Party have said, they're confused by the position adopted by their leader, who says that he's adamantly opposed to the HST, but on the other hand, should he earn the privilege of serving Ontarians in government, he's firmly committed to keeping the HST in place. So again, on behalf of Ontarians, I say to my honourable colleague, and through her to her party, where do they stand on the HST? Are they for it? Are they against it? If they're against it, will they rescind it?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: There's absolutely no confusion on this side of the House. It's clear that it hasn't been thought out over there with respect to health care professionals. In fact, I've spoken to physicians who've told me that they're going to have to close their doors as of July 1 because of your HST rules as far as health care is concerned.

But British Columbia has figured it out if Ontario hasn't. They discovered that hospitals would have to pay millions in HST just to hire temporary staff for computer support and consulting services before they enacted a fix. In Ontario, doctors and hospitals will pay HST not only for temporary staff, but for accounting, legal and cleaning services, power and medical supplies.

Will the next dollar you add to the health care budget be to cover the impact of the HST? Or are you expecting doctors and hospitals to stop buying bandages?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I would encourage—I actually have had an opportunity to read the report that the member is referencing from KPMG in regard to how that impacts people who belong to the Ontario Medical Association, our doctors.

Our doctors understand that to have high-quality public services we need to have people working and paying taxes, which is what this reform is about. What KPMG says is that the net impact to doctors, who as we know are exempt, is going to be very, very small. What they're saying to the doctors is as business people they have to make sure that they negotiate the very best price in the new regime that we have where we just have one sales tax in this province instead of two sales taxes. That's why I was so delighted to read the conclusions of the KPMG report.

I know that when it comes to our hospitals we have one of the most generous rebates in the country in regard—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is again to the Premier. The financial impact of the HST on health care in the hiring of temporary staff is only the tip of the iceberg. KPMG Canada says that "the greatest financial impact of the HST on physician practices will relate to practice expense components such as lease/rent costs and professional services...." Not every doctor has a margin big enough to afford the 8% increase.

Premier, how will you protect patients from the HST taking money away from front-line health care?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Revenue. Hon. John Wilkinson: I say to the member, one would have to read the entire report.

What does KPMG say to our medical community? There is going to be a change, a change that will ensure that there is a sufficient tax base to pay for our doctors, nurses and hospitals. But what it concludes is that the impact on our physicians is not 8%, as you say; that, all told, when you add in the reductions in income taxes for doctors, when you add in the reductions in corporate taxes for their corporations that provide those services, when you add in the fact that doctors will negotiate the very best price for their practice, the impact on this overall is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 1.6%. If you're saying to me, "Can doctors actually manage that under the new system, knowing they have a government that is committed to having sufficient money to pay for our universal health care?" they will tell you that is the right thing to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Well, the warning signs have been clear for some time and KPMG Canada is not the only one who warned you that the HST will make Ontario patients pay more to get less from health care.

In a December 19, 2009, report, Deloitte looked at medical supplies and said that the HST "represents a significant increase to the price ... and it is recommended that the tax status of these items be reviewed in detail...."

You had six months to act on KPMG's warning before Deloitte asked you to reconsider what you chose to exempt. Why did you do nothing to protect against Ontario patients paying more, again, to get less health care?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I find it passing strange that the member is talking about a report that is somewhat dated, but we have not heard from the Ontario Medical Association, which represents the doctors, who have not come to me to say that this is a problem.

What the doctors have told me is what we need to do is have sufficient economic growth, enough people in the province paying taxes because they have a job, enough corporations that are making a profit because they are finding economic success that they can contribute by the way of taxes so that we can have the very best health care system in the world. That is our common goal with our doctors and our nurses and those in health care. They understand that we can't have high unemployment and have high-quality public services.

So I want to thank the OMA and the doctors for understanding that this change is necessary so that we can afford the very best universal health care of any jurisdiction in the world. Thank you to the doctors.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: In fact, the news keeps getting worse and worse for Ontario families who keep paying more and getting less, especially in health care. The Premier is taking resources that municipalities, universities, schools, daycares, camps and charities all use for operating, and making them pay the HST. Similar to doctors and hospitals, others in the so-called MUSH sector are ineligible for full input tax credits and cannot claim their HST costs on their tax returns.

The question is, what programs will the Premier cut or make families pay more for through user fees, new taxes or deficit spending? Which one is it?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I find it interesting that the member is talking about maintaining the status quo, where that PST cost is imbedded in our health care; it's embedded in the cost of our universities, in our schools and in our charities.

Now, for the first time, we have as a province the most generous rebates of any province in this country. I want to thank the federal Minister of Finance, a chap by the name of Jim Flaherty, who decided that it was important that we work together. It's a leading Conservative like Jim Flaherty who—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. That's not helpful, the member from Halton.

Minister?

Hon. John Wilkinson: Again, we have leading Conservatives in this country at the federal level understanding that to have a strong Canada, we need to have a strong Ontario. I would say that we may have some division in this House, and I suppose there are other houses in Ontario where there's a division on this issue.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. The Premier refuses to say how much Ontario families will pay when his unfair HST kicks in on July 1. If the Premier is like other Ontarians, he maybe has sat down with his wife and discussed the impact of the HST on his own family's budget.

My question is this: Does the Premier know how much the HST is going to cost his family?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I think the best thing we can do in the circumstances is make reference to the multitude of independent, arm's-length, third party, dispassionate, objective studies that have reviewed the impact of our progressive package of tax reforms on the economy, on businesses and on our families. Overwhelmingly, they come to a couple of really important conclusions.

Number one, we're going to create 600,000 more jobs over the course of the next 10 years, which I think is really important not just to our families today but to our families tomorrow.

Secondly, they say that there will be a net gain to lowincome families, it's about a wash for middle-income families, and it costs a little bit more for upper-income families.

It's an important step. It's a necessary step. It will help strengthen our economy. It will help create more jobs.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here's the bottom line for the Premier and his family: They are going to pay more to keep their home warm in the winter. They're going to pay more to put gas in the car, to visit the hair salon, and to take Mickey the dog to the vet.

Does the Premier really know how much he spends on any of these items and how much an 8% tax hike will cost his family?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Mickey will be delighted to know that she has been referenced in this House. I want you to know I canvassed her a great deal on this particular initiative. She's very supportive.

To try to be serious, my colleague, of course, is doing what she needs to do, but I think it's really important that we look, again, to the objective reports that have been filed and prepared. As well, keep in mind what we have done as we've introduced the HST. It has not been introduced on its own; it has been accompanied by not only business tax reductions but by transition payments, new tax credits, property tax credits, those kinds of

things, which have been recognized by the Conference Board of Canada as having an overall positive impact on consumer spending in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Given the Premier's income, he can probably afford the HST, but the vast majority of Ontario families don't make more than \$200,000 a year. In seven weeks, these same families are going to pay 8% more on everything from utilities to gasoline and a whole lot more. It will be an extra \$800 a year for the average Ontario family, an added burden for families that already scramble to pay the bills every month. Every day, I hear from them through emails and through letters.

Does the Premier really understand their plight? Does he have any idea how much this unfair tax is going to hurt them?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We've been particularly diligent when it comes to ensuring that low-income Ontarians are not affected adversely. In fact, all the reports we've had show us that those folks are going to come out ahead.

I'd ask my honourable colleague to ask herself, why is it that poverty groups and food banks are in support of our tax reforms? I think that's important for them to take into account.

The sales tax credit, for example, is something that we have introduced. It's now a permanent feature. It is \$120 for every member of the family. It is permanent. This is what the representative from the Daily Bread Food Bank said about it: "The sales tax credit is a sensible, forward-looking way" to deal with the single sales tax, "and could become an important long-term piece of the economic security puzzle for poor people" in Ontario.

NURSES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier as well. This morning, we're joined in the members' gallery by Erin Dykstra. Ms. Dykstra is a recent nursing graduate with specialty training in labour and delivery, and she has been working at the Toronto East General Hospital for the past two years. In March, she received a layoff notice from the hospital.

The Premier insists that Ontario is not losing nurses. Is he denying that Ms. Dykstra has lost her job?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's Nursing Week in Ontario, and I just want to take the opportunity on behalf of all Ontarians to thank our nurses for the work that they do for us every single day.

I'm proud of our policies, even though they've been opposed by the opposition parties, that have resulted in hiring over 10,000 new nurses in the province, and I'm proud that we have in place our nursing—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It's getting a little warm in here.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I can assure the honourable member from Oxford it's coming from both sides of the House.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to welcome this particular nurse to the Legislature and let her and her colleagues throughout the province know that the work they do on behalf of all of us is very important to all of us.

We also have a nursing graduate guarantee program in place. I think we've hired some 8,300 new nurses through that.

There will be, from time to time, some movement of nurses within the sector. That is inevitable. What we will continue to do is to find ways to invest in health care and ensure that we can continue to hire our nurses.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: You don't thank nurses by giving them layoff notices. Ms. Dykstra is here, and she's like a lot of other nurses across this province. She completed a nursing degree and specialty training and was looking forward to a long career in this province. But because of this government's careless decision-making, Ms. Dykstra is leaving Ontario to work as a nurse in Nova Scotia. Despite this government's spin, the reality is that nurses are being laid off and patients are suffering.

When will the Premier finally admit that cuts are happening and commit to fixing the situation before more young, dedicated nurses like Erin Dykstra are forced to leave Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I'm always concerned about any nurses who feel that they might have to leave Ontario to find employment elsewhere. In fact, what we've demonstrated is that, more and more, we keep drawing in nurses from other parts of the country and other parts of the US, who are returning to Ontario. There are almost 11,000 new nursing positions in Ontario. There are 1,200 more nursing positions today than there were this time last year.

We are also increasing spots—200—for our new nurse practitioners: 200. We're creating the first nurse-practitioner-led clinics in all of North America here in Ontario. We have provided nurses with everything from extra support when it comes to bed lifts to additional training opportunities, creating more opportunities for students to become nurses in an accelerated period of time—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Premier. Final supplementary.

1100

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Once again, the Premier is showing exactly how out of touch he is. He rhymes off statistics and numbers, but the reality is that patients are facing reductions in care. That's the reality, and those realities speak for themselves.

Nurses like Erin Dykstra are leaving the province to find work because there is no work for them here. Doctors are concerned about cuts to front-line care and are actually now being told to sign gag orders so they don't talk about those cuts. Patients are being flown out of the country because doctors can't be found to perform surgeries for them.

How long will this Premier continue to deny the crisis that has been created by his government's poor health care decisions?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to remind my honourable colleague that she belongs to a party which reduced medical school spaces in the province of Ontario. I want to remind her as well that it was the Conservative government that shut down hospitals and laid off nurses in the province of Ontario.

In addition to the 11,000 new nursing positions that are in Ontario today, I want to remind my honourable colleague that this week there are 381 full-time nursing positions being advertised. There are 28 nursing positions available at the Hamilton Health Sciences centre, six available at the University Health Network, 25 at the Ottawa Hospital and seven at the Peterborough Regional Health Centre: jobs available right now in nursing.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I can understand an occasional interjection, but monotonous, relentless interjections cause our guests who are here today challenges in hearing, so I would encourage all members to try and tone it down a little bit, please.

New question.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mr. Frank Klees: The killing off of some 350 animals at the York region SPCA continues as we speak. Yesterday, I called on the Minister of Community Safety to put a stay on that plan.

Interjection: To whom?

Mr. Frank Klees: The Minister of Community Safety. Yesterday, I called on the minister to put a stay on that plan, pending the community being able to put in place an alternative solution to this problem. The minister stated to me that he has no authority and that he trusts the experts who have made this call. I disagree with the minister. I don't trust the SPCA and its decisions. There is not one veterinarian throughout York region, and we have not found one in this province, who agrees that it is either necessary or the right thing to do.

Cam Woolley of CP24 just told me that the spokespeople at the site are deliberately vague and evasive and are refusing to provide any factual information.

I ask the minister this: Why, if in fact there are alternative options available, does he stand by and wash his hands and allow this euthanasia to take place?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: First of all, I want to thank the member for the letter he sent to me and the Minister of Agriculture. I want to thank him for the discussion that we had.

Truly, we have no authority to put a stay in place. He knows that and I know that. The Ontario SPCA is an independent body. They are governed—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. This is a very important issue. The honourable member would like to hear the answer.

Minister?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: They have a board of directors. If anyone has a concern, they should go to that board of directors. In fact, the member has already contacted the chair of the board of directors. We understand that. There is a differing of opinion between the Ontario SPCA and the member, but at the end of the day, this entity had to make a very, very difficult decision.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: This entity has made the wrong decision, and this minister and this government continue to wash their hands.

I don't trust the SPCA. I don't trust the board. It's the wrong decision. Veterinarians, animal rescue organizations and ordinary citizens across this province are saying, "Let us be part of an alternative solution that will save the lives of these animals."

Why will the minister, if he doesn't feel that he has the legal authority, not use his persuasive powers, pick up the phone, call them and say, "Look, it's wrong what you're doing. Stop it. Let's give at least 24 hours to put an alternative solution in place"? Why will he not do that?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: To the member's question in particular: I have contacted the executive director. I asked, "Were all options explored?" She said yes. I said, "How was the decision made?" She said that it was made by veterinarians in consultation with other veterinarians and other animal welfare experts.

We have to trust that, at the end of the day, this group has acted in the best interests that we have within the framework of the very serious situation that was, is and will be in place for the next little while.

LABOUR DISPUTE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. In today's Ontario, Vale Inco is allowed by Ontario's law to start up their full operation using replacement workers during a labour dispute. This has galvanized parties on both sides. All of Vale Inco's energy is spent restarting their operation and all the Steelworkers' efforts are spent trying to stop them. This is pushing both sides further apart. There's very little energy left for sitting down and settling the labour dispute.

Vale Inco can do this legally in Ontario. Under this government's law, they have the right to bring replacement workers: replacement workers who will tear my community apart, rip the social fabric of Sudbury and inflict wounds that will stay for generations to come. Is the Premier proud of these laws and the horrible consequences to my community?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to thank the member for her question, and I want to express to her that I fully appreciate the real concerns that people in Sudbury have regarding this protracted labour dispute.

Minister Bartolucci has kept me apprised of events there as they have unfolded. To be perfectly clear, we strongly urge and encourage the employer not to hire replacement workers. It is not the kind of thing that we, in our government, would do. In fact, we specifically adopted that as a policy on our part, just so my honourable colleague knows where we stand on this. The employer also knows—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The Premier has the power to change this. The Premier has the power to change the situation that is tearing apart my community's social fabric. The Premier knows that tensions are very high in Sudbury as we await a court decision at noon today. Some of the wounds that will be inflicted on Sudbury's families today won't heal for generations to come. We will live with them for the rest of our lives.

You have it in your power, Mr. Premier, to change all this, to bring back the focus on negotiating a fair settlement, to bring the energy back to the negotiation table. You've talked about anti-scab legislation. I ask you today: Will you commit to bringing in anti-scab legislation for Ontario so nobody has to live through what I'm living through in my community today?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We are, as I know my honourable colleague is, very much committed to a negotiated resolution of the differences. There is a hearing, as I understand it, before the Ontario Labour Relations Board this Friday. That will be an important opportunity for the sides to address specific issues and have that resolved by an objective party.

But beyond that, anything at all that our government can do to put in place the necessary mediation and conciliation services, we are more than prepared to do. In fact, we have done some of that in the past. Again, I call upon both sides to do everything they possibly can to resolve this at the earliest possible opportunity.

1110

GRADUATION RATES

Mr. Pat Hoy: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, Ontario's secondary school graduation rates have been steadily climbing since the McGuinty government took office, from 68% in 2002-03 to the announced 2008-09 rate of 79%. The past year alone has seen a graduation rate increase of 2%.

The figure speaks volumes to the work our teachers and support staff are doing to ensure that students are successful in their studies. However, the opposition members are of the opinion, recently voiced by the leader of the NDP, that our graduation rate numbers are fudged.

Minister, are these numbers accurate? Or do they misrepresent high school graduation rates in Ontario, as members of the opposition would contest?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I thank the honourable member for the question because I think that it is very important that members of this assembly, certainly, but

the public in general, are aware of the success of the students in our secondary schools.

As a result of working with our partners in education, particularly at the secondary level, we as a government have looked for ways and made investments in secondary schools that have enabled our students to be more successful. As a result, the graduation rate of students in Ontario has increased by 11% since we came to government.

That is good news, obviously, for the students and for their families, but it's also good news for those employers—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Pat Hoy: Last week, you announced expansion of the government's specialist high skills major program. Members of the opposition have said that this program is simply a watering-down of the Ontario secondary school curriculum designed to increase our graduation rates.

I understand that SHSMs allows high school students to bundle courses in order to pursue a specific academic stream or career path. In the 2010-11 year, more students are expected to participate in these programs in more schools across the province. After announcing the sports and non-profit SHSMs last week, some members of the opposition felt that the programs are intended to make the curriculum easier and increase grad rate numbers.

Minister, are the specialist high skills majors simply an easy way out for students seeking their Ontario secondary school diploma?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I think it's an important opportunity, particularly to clarify for the members of the opposition who fail to see the importance and the significance of this innovative program in our secondary schools, the specialist high skills major.

These courses provide students with a first-hand opportunity and experience in various regimens, whether it's in agriculture, aeronautics, sports or not-for-profit. They come to understand first-hand the experiences that they can have following high school if they get a graduation diploma. They understand the kinds of careers they can pursue if they get a graduation diploma. We believe that this has contributed significantly to having Ontario youth understand that.

TAXATION

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Premier. There are just 50 days left until your greedy HST starts grabbing 8% out of the pockets of Ontario families who fuel their cars to get—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Municipal Affairs. Minister of the Environment. The member from Eglinton-Lawrence.

Please continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —before the HST starts grabbing 8% out of the pockets of Ontario families who fuel their cars to get to work, take their kids to sports or music

lessons, or take a driving vacation in the province. You've known all along that families will pay more because of the HST, so you must know how much the HST on gas will cost them.

How much more will Dalton McGuinty take out of the pockets of the average Ontario family to pay the HST on

gas this year?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know, once again, that my honourable colleague will appreciate that without the support of his party—the continuing support of his party—we simply would not have been able to move ahead with this important initiative.

I want to refer him to remarks offered by his former leader, a man who I know he strongly supported. He said the following: "I think" that Mr. Hudak "has not acknowledged something that pretty well everybody else has.... A lot of people call and say it is going to help with productivity and job creation and investment and the cost of capital." He went on to say, "I'm not trying to second-guess Mr. Hudak, but I would have taken a different position because I would have felt dishonest doing otherwise."

I just want to welcome once again yet another member of the Conservative Party for their support of this important public policy initiative.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I think the Premier is failing to answer the question for Ontario families. The Premier knows the answer, but he isn't saying. The annual HST for fuelling a mid-sized car will be over \$300, and it will cost more for trucks and minivans.

Glen Bonham of Minden is worried about what the Premier knows but isn't telling about the HST on gas. I quote him as he says, "One of the biggest impacts here in Haliburton will be the rise in the price of gasoline."

The member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock isn't asking Glen Bonham's question, so I will. Why won't Premier McGuinty come clean with what he knows about how much the HST will cost families who have to drive their cars?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Stop the clock. Start the clock.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I would encourage my honourable colleague to sit down with his counterpart member of Parliament for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. I encourage him to sit down and speak with him at length about this matter

Interjection: Her.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Her—sorry. Ms. Gallant—to speak with her at length about this matter. I'm sure that she would advise him as to all the reasons that have led to the support of Mr. Flaherty, Ms. Ecker, Mr. Baird, Mr. Clement, Mr. Tory, Mr. Harris, Senator Runciman, Prime Minister Harper and so many others.

I think it's time for the few remaining members of the Conservative Party who are opposed to this to get on board with the overwhelming consensus that has developed among Conservatives both in Ottawa and here at Queen's Park—and in Ontario itself—in support of our package of tax reforms, because it's all about more jobs for Ontario families.

BREASTFEEDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Promotion de la santé.

Today will be the eighth time in this Legislature that I have raised the issue of breastfeeding. Each time, I have urged the minister to look at the statistics, to listen to mothers and health experts—many of them are in the gallery here today—and create a province-wide standard and program that will support breastfeeding. Well, I have great news: The minister has the opportunity to adopt a well-researched and collaborative strategy that will bring a long-awaited provincial breastfeeding strategy to Ontario.

My question is simple: Will the minister adopt this report?

Hon. Margarett R. Best: I want to say, first of all, welcome to all the breastfeeding supporters who are in the House today. I want to make it clear, unequivocally, that I am a supporter of breastfeeding, as a mother who breastfed all my children and also as the Minister of Health Promotion.

I want to take this opportunity to tell the House about Ontario's 36 public health units and the government's work in providing funding for breastfeeding supports and services, including parent information support phone lines, breastfeeding resource materials and website postings, prenatal classes, breastfeeding clinics, and the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program. We understand the importance of breastfeeding to healthy children and healthy moms.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: If the minister wants me to say thank you for a patchwork of services that sometimes works and sometimes doesn't, I'm not going to. What we need is an Ontario-wide provincial strategy that makes sure that no moms and no babies are left behind.

The report is there. It costs next to nothing. It would bring a strategy that would help. In Ontario, 97% of moms initiate breastfeeding and 15% of them succeed to six months. There's a big gap there. Some of the patchwork is helping some of the women, but we have here a province-wide strategy. Why won't the minister agree to a province-wide breastfeeding strategy for all of Ontario?

Hon. Margarett R. Best: I want to take this opportunity as well to thank the many organizations and individuals who have proposed recommendations for the provincial breastfeeding strategy. We will review the documentation that has been provided to us.

We understand the importance of developing further supportive environments for breastfeeding support. We understand that breastfeeding is very important to the health of infants, and I would urge all mothers who have infants to breastfeed. It's a very important thing for their kids.

We, in this government, continue to look at other strategies to address this very important issue. It's a very important issue for our government, and we understand the importance of developing supportive environments for breastfeeding infants.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: My question today is for the Minister of Transportation. Earlier this week, I was at the Oakville GO station for the launch of the second phase of the Presto smart card. Many of my constituents commute into downtown Toronto on the GO train, and they're looking forward to the convenience of using one card to travel along multiple transit systems.

When my constituents, and I think all Ontarians, travel abroad and they go to places like London, Hong Kong, San Francisco, Seattle and Holland, they experience first-hand how easy and convenient electronic fare systems are to travel across transit systems. It seems like here in Ontario we're using best experiences from other world-class cities and regions.

Can you please tell this House what the plans are for expanding Presto across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to thank the member from Oakville for his support for this great initiative.

Presto's the first-ever regional fare card for public transit riders in Ontario, and it really is a key part of our regional approach to transit in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. It's about connecting transit systems in the region to make it easier and more seamless for people to take transit.

We have to be honest here: We are lagging behind other jurisdictions when it comes to fare cards. The member from Oakville has noted that other jurisdictions have this technology and to great success. We're partnering with GO Transit and nine municipal transit systems on this initiative. The people at Presto are doing a great job integrating the business practices of these 10 authorities.

Presto's being rolled out to commuters in stages, starting with Oakville and Burlington transit systems, Oakville and Union GO stations and seven downtown TTC stations this month. Then we'll be moving on to Mississauga Transit, Brampton Transit, Durham region—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thanks for the response, Minister. That's obviously great news for my constituents and I think for all constituents around the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

It sounds like we have made some good progress in getting GO Transit and local transit providers in places like Brampton, for example, and my own community of Oakville onboard with the Presto system. Hopefully, the Presto card is going to encourage more people to use transit and leave their cars at home.

Minister, I understand also that the Presto smart card is a very sophisticated piece of technology. Can you please tell the House a little bit more about how the Presto system works and how it actually benefits transit users?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member from Oakville is right. We're hoping that the Presto card will act as an incentive to get people out of their cars and to take public transit. We know that the Presto card offers a lot of benefits and conveniences to its users.

The card just needs to be loaded with a dollar value. People can do this in person or over the phone. They can do it online or register to have it loaded automatically, and it's ready to tap on to a fare card reader at the subway station, on a bus or on a train. People tapping on the bus or the train means they're not fumbling for change, tickets or tokens, and this will help reduce lineups. It'll mean fewer delays for getting on to buses or trains and help make our transit network more efficient.

The other great thing about Presto is that it offers transit agencies a powerful tool for managing their routes. They can gather data and make better decisions about route allocation.

TAXATION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. You know that many families are privately paying for intensive behavioural intervention because the wait-list is ridiculously long for provincially funded therapy. As you know, IBI therapy can cost families up to \$60,000 per year. Now these same families are concerned that they will be forced to pay the HST on IBI therapy purchased after July 1.

Will the minister confirm today that all families paying for IBI therapies out of their own pocket will not have to pay the hated HST?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to have a chance to speak about the expansion of services that we've been able to provide across the province for those families who are able to use our government service.

The HST will not apply to any IBI services that are government-funded. For many families in Ontario, the fact that we have quadrupled the funding for government-funded IBI service is critically important. I know that the families who are able to use that service are very pleased about that initiative. If a parent chooses to purchase private IBI services from a registered psychologist, those services will also continue to be exempt.

I give clarity to the member opposite that the services by a private IBI service, by a registered psychologist, will continue to be exempt.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary? The member from Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: That is not a clear answer, Minister. Minister, I have heard from parents and the professionals who provide IBI therapy to the autistic children in my riding. One such professional, Stacey Sugar, tells me that families are already limiting the number of hours of

IBI therapy for their children by what they can currently afford to pay. Making them pay another 8% in HST will only force them to cut back those hours even further. In the words of one parent, "Taxing autistic children is immoral."

Minister, will you accept responsibility for the impact that HST on IBI therapy is going to have on autistic children in Ontario across the board?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Perhaps I didn't speak loudly enough, so I'll speak more loudly. We have quadrupled autism spending from \$44 million to \$165 million since 2003-04. More families are getting government-funded services, and those families will not pay any tax on the delivery of that service because we are providing that service.

For families who purchase private IBI services from a registered psychologist, those services will continue to be exempt in the same way that they are currently exempt from the GST. If they pay GST on the autism services that they provide, those services will be part of the new tax system. I wish the federal government did not apply the GST to these services, but that is up to them.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. On April 30, Hamilton's mayor wrote to the Premier with very specific requests regarding poverty reduction. Hamilton has been hit hard by job losses and has a growing number of residents who are forced to rely on social assistance. Given the situation in Hamilton and elsewhere in this province, this government's social assistance program review really does need to be expanded.

The question that the mayor asked and I'm repeating here is: Will the review consider an emergency increase to social assistance through a healthy food or housing allowance that could be made available quickly to people who are in need?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'm very proud that this government moved forward with this poverty reduction strategy. Part of it is a review of social assistance.

We will be receiving recommendations pretty soon from the advisory committee that I put forward, and they will advise me on the scope of the review of social assistance. When we have this, then we will proceed to appoint people to do the review of social assistance. It's much needed, and we're very proud of what we have proposed so far.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Hamilton's mayor and council, along with all of those working to alleviate poverty in Hamilton, are united in our call for some real action. We see the McGuinty government clawing back the Ontario child benefit by reducing the basic needs allowance. We see social assistance rates that keep families stuck living below subsistence levels. We see people on Ontario

Works and ODSP scraping by on rates that aren't indexed and that fail to actually reach the real cost of living. Will the Premier finally address the inadequate social assistance rates in the province, or will people continue to live in desperate, desperate poverty?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to thank the community of Hamilton for the exceptional work that they have done, bringing together a Hamilton round table to talk about the complicated and complex issues that face families who live in poverty, and working with our government. I can tell you that I work closely with leaders in the Hamilton community like Mark Chamberlain, and I've attended many meetings with him and with our MPP from Hamilton, Ms. Aggelonitis, to talk about these critical issues.

I know the people of Hamilton really respect and support the fact that our government has stepped in and provided \$63.5 million per year for child care, and that child care will help the very families whom the member opposite is talking about. Full-day early learning for four-and five-year-olds: That too will help those families who are struggling in poverty in Hamilton. These are critical—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Ma question s'adresse à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones.

Le commissaire aux services en français, François Boileau, fait un travail remarquable pour s'assurer que les droits linguistiques de la communauté francophone en Ontario sont bien respectés, conformément à la loi provinciale de 1986 sur les services en français.

Depuis la création du commissariat en 2007, le commissaire a déposé deux rapports annuels ainsi qu'un rapport sur la santé en français. De nombreux francophones de mon comté apprécient le travail du commissaire, et j'aimerais, Madame la Ministre, que vous nous informiez sur les recommandations que le commissaire a faites dans ses rapports.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je voudrais d'abord remercier le député de Glengarry-Prescott-Russell pour son intérêt dans les affaires francophones.

Oui, nous avons créé le Commissariat aux services en français, et cela prouve que notre gouvernement est prêt à rendre compte à la population que nous servons. Par exemple, le 15 janvier dernier, la ministre de la Santé, Deb Matthews, et moi-même avons annoncé la création d'entités de planification pour les services de santé en français. Le commissaire avait émis un communiqué de presse à cette occasion et je vous le cite : « Cette annonce constitue une réponse positive et concrète à l'une de mes recommandations issues de mon rapport spécial sur la santé en mai 2009. »

Ceci est un exemple, parmi d'autres, que notre gouvernement prend très au sérieux les services en français dans la province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Merci, Madame la Ministre. Je suis heureux de voir que le gouvernement écoute les recommandations du commissaire.

Dans son deuxième rapport annuel, le commissaire avait reconnu le leadership de votre ministère en ce qui concerne l'amélioration d'accès aux services en français dans le système de justice. Cependant, il avait dirigé deux recommandations : de créer une stratégie pour la traduction des règlements et d'établir un comité pour rechercher activement des moyens de parfaire les connaissances en droits linguistiques des membres de la magistrature en Ontario, et de proposer des pistes d'actions pour pallier le manque de juges bilingues en Ontario.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'll refer the question to the-

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Madame la Ministre, je sais que lors de la sortie de ce rapport, vous aviez dit à cette—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'll refer the question to the Attorney General, please.

L'hon. Christopher Bentley: Merci pour la question.

Premièrement, on a créé un comité consultatif de la magistrature et du barreau sur les services en français, présidé par le juge Paul Rouleau et Me Paul Le Vay de l'Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario. J'ai hâte de travailler avec les membres de ce comité et de recevoir leurs recommandations.

On a aussi commencé à travailler sur le projet de la traduction des règlements. La première réunion d'un groupe de travail interministériel est prévue au cours du mois de mai. Les membres du groupe de travail vont adopter une approche cohérente dans l'établissement de l'ordre de priorité des règlements à traduire avec les autres—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Last week, the Liberal member for Timiskaming—Cochrane admitted something that we already knew, that there's at least 5,000 megawatts of untapped and unused hydroelectric capacity in northern Ontario. This energy, if realized, would boost our capacity, provide northern Ontario with cheap electricity for industry and residents, and provide valuable construction jobs to the people of the north. Your members in the north know that you're squandering these opportunities to generate the cheapest, greenest, and most reliable power that we all know. You're wasting these opportunities to create jobs here instead of Korea. How do you

justify wasting \$7 billion on foreign companies when you could spend it here in Ontario?

Hon. Brad Duguid: These guys just cannot stop making their policies based on division, based on conflict. We have to work with all countries around the world; we have to work with all people. That's part of being an open economy; that's part of being an open Ontario.

When it comes to opening up opportunities in the north, nobody, no government is investing in transmission like we're investing in it. We've got over \$2.3 billion of transmission being built across this province. Much of that will be opening up the north. When you look at our throne speech, when we look at the Ring of Fire and the work we're doing to open up opportunities and economic opportunities in the north, a lot of that will require transmission built, and we're looking carefully at doing that. We're committed to opening up the north. We're committed to tapping into those energy sources—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: My office has received a feasibility study done by the Independent Electricity System Operator which states that there's 2,500 megawatts of power available in the Moose and the Albany River basins. That's 2,500 megawatts in this one project alone. The study states that not only is it possible to generate this power, but it's also possible and feasible to transmit that power to southern Ontario.

Minister, do you not read these reports that come into your office, reports about projects that generate power here in Ontario by local companies that would build our northern economy? Or do you prefer only to take your advice directly from Samsung and those who enrich the Liberal Party?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask the member to withdraw that last comment, please.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'll withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: After eight years of absolutely hardly any build happening under that government, we're aggressively working at creating new generation in the province, and when it comes to hydro, we're in the process right now in partnership with Moose Cree First Nation and moving forward with the largest hydro build in 40 years in Ontario. No government has been more committed to renewables than—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. I just remind the honourable member from Lanark that he did ask the question. He should listen to the answer, and as he knows, within the standing orders, if he is not satisfied with the answer he can file a late show.

Minister.

Hon. Brad Duguid: No government has been more committed to building more renewables than this government. In fact, we're world and global leaders when it comes to this. I ask the member where he has been when we brought in our Green Energy Act? What articles has he been reading when it comes to the good news that's

happening across this province: the 50,000 jobs being created because of the investments we're making in development projects; the \$9 billion that recently has been announced that will be going into our economy of private sector investments? And yes, we welcome investments from abroad in Ontario, because this is a great place to invest. It's a great place to create jobs. It's a great place—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New

question.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. Premier, your government announced with great fanfare and repeated numerous times that you have a new relationship with First Nations. My question simply is this: You know that Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Treaty 5, those affected by the Far North planning act, are opposed to the continued process that your government has to enact that legislation. Why are you moving forward with this legislation when clearly they're telling you not to?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member is absolutely right: We do have a very different and a better relationship with First Nations. It's a relationship based on discussion, based on negotiation, based on recognizing our shared futures, particularly in the north but throughout the province of Ontario.

My colleague the Minister of Natural Resources, my colleague the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, our ministry and others are working very closely, and will continue to, with NAN, with Treaty 5, with all affected areas in making sure that the planning process for the north for the future can accommodate all of our wishes and will be a better economic future for the province of Ontario and for First Nations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, I'm afraid, from where the First Nations sit, the relationship is no different. It is more colonialism when it comes to the approach of how we deal with the issues that affect First Nations.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is being very clear in the resolution that they put forward this spring. They said that Bill 191 must be deferred until NAN First Nations and Ontario agree on a consultation, accommodation and consent process. So, clearly they don't want you to go forward. Why are you doing so when they're telling you not to?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The only thing that's stuck in the past is the question.

When we approached the issue of the Mining Act and the reforms to the Mining Act, there was a completely different approach than that which was followed many years ago, including by his government. When we approached the issue of training, of post-secondary opportunities, there was a completely different approach—as

evidenced through the budget with the \$45 million for training directed to the north around the Ring of Fire—than was evidenced in the past. When we approached the issue of Far North land use planning, there was a consultative approach from the beginning. When we approached the issue of the HST, we stood together with First Nations. We need the federal government to come onside. And when we—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Minister, you can wrap up.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: That's the old approach. Those who laugh at a working, co-operative, consultative relationship—they're stuck in the past. We're for the future. We're working with First Nations, side by side.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to remind the Minister of Children and Youth Services that you're required, under standing order 99(d), to file answers to written questions within 24 sitting days. Your responses to five questions from the member from Dufferin—Caledon are now overdue, and I would ask that you give the House some indication as to when the responses will be forthcoming.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: They will be forthcoming very, very shortly.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Earlier today, in a response to the question from the member from Whitby—Oshawa, the Minister of Revenue cited a report from KPMG in which he said that the report states that the HST will have a very small net effect on doctors and their costs. There is absolutely nothing in the report that says that. He further said that the net effect would be a 1.6% increase. There is nothing in the report that says that. I have a copy of the report here and I'd be glad to share that with the table—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. It's not a point of order. I trust that all members, when they are quoting from reports, will be providing the best information to the House.

DEFERRED VOTES

EXCELLENT CARE FOR ALL ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR L'EXCELLENCE DES SOINS POUR TOUS

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 46, An Act respecting the care provided by health care organizations / Projet de loi 46, Loi relative aux soins fournis par les organismes de soins de santé.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This will be a five-minuet bell.

The division bells rang from 1144 to 1149.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith has moved second reading of Bill 46, An Act respecting the care provided by health care organizations. All those in favour will rise one at a time to be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia Albanese, Laura Arthurs, Wayne Ralkissoon Ras Barrett, Toby Bartolucci, Rick Bentley, Christopher Best, Margarett Bisson, Gilles Bradley, James J. Broten, Laurel C. Brownell, Jim Cansfield Donna H Carroll, Aileen Chan, Michael Chudleigh, Ted Clark, Steve Colle, Mike Crozier, Bruce Dickson, Joe Dombrowsky, Leona Duguid, Brad Duncan, Dwight Flynn, Kevin Daniel Fonseca, Peter Gerretsen, John

Gélinas, France Gravelle, Michael Hampton, Howard Hardeman Emie Hoskins, Eric Hov. Pat Jaczek, Helena Jeffrey, Linda Johnson, Rick Jones, Sylvia Kormos, Peter Lalonde, Jean-Marc Leal, Jeff Levac, Dave MacLeod, Lisa Marchese, Rosario Matthews, Deborah Mauro, Bill McGuinty, Dalton McNeely, Phil Meilleur, Madeleine Miller, Norm Miller, Paul Milloy, John Mitchell, Carol Munro, Julia

Nagvi, Yasir O'Toole, John Orazietti. David Quellette, Jerry J. Phillips, Gerry Prue, Michael Pupatello, Sandra Ramal, Khalil Ramsay, David Rinaldi, Lou Ruprecht, Tony Sandals, Liz Sergio, Mario Shurman, Peter Smith, Monique Sousa, Charles Sterling, Norman W. Tabuns, Peter Takhar, Harinder S. Van Bommel, Maria Wilkinson, John Wilson, Jim Wynne, Kathleen O. Yakabuski, John Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?
The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 77; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): So ordered.

NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nickel Belt has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Health Promotion concerning breastfeeding. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nickel Belt has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Premier concerning replacement workers. This matter will be debated at 6 p.m. today.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1153 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. John O'Toole: I would like members to join me in welcoming a very distinguished member from my

riding, Mr. Mike Roche. I'll be making in my statement a more appropriate introduction, but he's involved with the MS Society of Durham, as well as the MS Society of Ontario. He's here today and has a very worthy message that I will make later on. Thank you for joining us today, Mike.

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I just want to introduce some of the members from our ministry staff, as well as some people from not-for-profit organizations who are here to listen to the bill this afternoon. I would like to introduce Deputy Minister George Ross, Richard Frank, Lynn Butler, Eunha Kim, Kiran Persaud, Julie Grant, Yen Tung, Larissa Hretchka, Michelle Canale, Allen Doppelt, Jennifer Lee and Michael Coe, as well as Wayne Gray, Lynn Eakin, Clifford Goldfarb, Margaret Emin and Fred Enzel.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Please join me in welcoming Jeanne Samonas, president of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario, and volunteers from a number of support groups from across Ontario who are here with her today. Welcome.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would like to invite all members of the House to welcome some extraordinary nurses here today. These are nurses with the Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario, better known as POGO: Bruna DiMonte is the POGO nursing committee and database administrator; Karen Drybrough is the Interlink nurse team leader from Toronto; Dianne Dekkers is the Interlink nurse from Barrie-Muskoka; Marilyn Cassidy is the Interlink nurse from Ottawa; Margaret Warden is the Interlink nurse from London; Dr. Corin Greenberg, POGO executive director; Vanessa Yakobson, POGO director of fundraising; and Jacqui DeBique, POGO communications and knowledge transfer manager.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm anxiously awaiting additional citizens from my riding of Durham. From Community Living Durham North, they're: Jamie Ross, who is the treasurer; Larry Leonard, who's the president; and Glenn Taylor, who's the executive director of Community Living Durham North. They're here to make a statement about the status of their budget, and I will leave that for other members to talk about.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TAMMY EPP

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Benjamin Franklin once said, "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." Earlier this year, a kindergarten teacher at Manordale Public School, Mrs. Tammy Epp, was nominated by her peers, her superiors and parents for the Ontario teaching awards, which I consider remarkable.

But to know Tammy Epp is to know that she is remarkable and one who deserves the honour of having been nominated for this prestigious award. We all remember that one teacher in school who made the difference. That teacher could connect on a personal level, could teach any subject and make it fun, and most of all inspired us to believe what we could achieve, not what we couldn't. Tammy Epp is that kind of teacher. She is that teacher Benjamin Franklin spoke of: "Involve me and I learn." This is because it's not only the students that she teaches she involves, it's also the parents.

Tammy Epp has a winning way, and it's because she takes the time to know her students and their parents and make learning fun by involving everyone. Cathy Babyak, who nominated Tammy Epp for the Ontario teacher awards, wrote to me, "Tammy Epp is a very special person who I feel very fortunate to know.... I am happy to have had Tammy help set the foundation for my parental involvement in my kids' education, as well as help my children, Alyssa and Nate, directly as their teacher in junior kindergarten."

That sentiment is not one that is alone. In fact, it is shared by many parents and students throughout Manordale Public School. Mrs. Epp's many admirers can often be heard at school functions, on the playground and at community association events, where you are regarded as a lucky parent to have had the opportunity that your child is given the gift of Tammy Epp's kindergarten experience.

To her students and their parents, Tammy Epp is teacher of the year, and on behalf of them I want to say, thank you, Tammy, for making a difference and thank you for involving us.

EVENTS IN HAMILTON EAST–STONEY CREEK

Mr. Paul Miller: I would like to talk about two important events that will take place in Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. Glendale Secondary School, which the Speaker has visited with me, a prominent school of over 1,000 students, is celebrating its 50th anniversary on the last weekend in May. Former teachers, students and staff will be visiting from far and near to relive fond memories and renew lost friendships. A portal of east Hamilton's community spirit, Glendale Secondary School is staging plays, concerts and sporting and social events to celebrate this anniversary. I congratulate the many staff and community volunteers who have taken so much of their own time to organize this event and I look forward to celebrating it with them.

Over the weekend of May 21 to 23, the Croatian National Home will be hosting the 36th annual Canadian-Croatian Folklore Festival in Hamilton East. For 80 years, the Croatian National Home has been promoting Croatian culture in Canada through traditional tambura music and dances. I encourage everyone who will be in Hamilton East over the Victoria Day weekend to join me and an anticipated audience of 2,000 people to enjoy over 500 performers. It's wonderful that we can celebrate Croatian heritage here in Ontario, and I look forward to joining in the festivities, although I may not be taking part in the dancing. I'm not an expert.

DISEASE AWARENESS

Mr. Joe Dickson: Prior to my statement, I would appreciate requesting unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker. Today is International Awareness Day for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia and Multiple Chemical Sensitivities. The ribbons being distributed to all members have three colours and represent awareness of each illness: blue for myalgic encephalomyelitis, purple for fibromyalgia and green for multiple chemical sensitivities. I would like to ask for unanimous consent that all members be allowed to wear the ribbons that represent these conditions.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Today is May 12, the International Awareness Day for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia and Multiple Chemical Sensitivities. These illnesses have many overlapping symptoms, including neurological and cognitive problems, muscle and joint pain, and overwhelming fatigue. These illnesses are all debilitating, multi-system physical illnesses that affect individuals of all ages, youth and children included.

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According to the Canadian Community Health Survey, over a million Canadians have been diagnosed with one or more of these conditions, and 440,000 of these people live in Ontario. These are real people with real illnesses, and they need our help and support. More research is needed into the causes and treatments. No treatment or research centre exists yet in Ontario.

The Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario is hosting an awareness event outside Queen's Park today to put a real face on those people who live with these life-changing illnesses. It takes courage every day to live knowing that there is no cure and no ongoing funding for treatment, research and education of our Ontario health care practitioners. Let's look at educating Ontario and making all Ontarians aware.

Please join me in applauding the efforts of many dedicated volunteers who do their best to provide education, information and support. We in this province can make a difference.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. John O'Toole: Earlier today, I sought unanimous consent to wear the red carnation in support of the MS Society. My statement is that I thank the Speaker for the honour of supporting MS Awareness Month and the MS carnation campaign. I thank all members of the Legislature who have shown their dedication to the people affected by MS by wearing the carnation today.

It is known that women are diagnosed with MS three times as often as men. Many Canadians living with multiple sclerosis are mothers, and many more adults and children are affected by this disease. That's why every year the MS carnation campaign takes place around the time of Mother's Day weekend.

For over 60 years, the MS Society of Canada has provided hope and help for people with MS across Canada—hope through their extension of national research programs, and help through services which make life better for people suffering with MS and their families.

I'm pleased today to have been joined by four members and representatives of the MS Society: Natasha Mistry and Kim Steele, who I introduced earlier, from the Ontario division office—and Mike Roche from the Durham regional chapter and a constituent of mine.

Mike was diagnosed with MS in 2001 and joined the MS Society in 2002. In October 2003, he became the social action director of the Durham regional chapter of the MS Society, a position he holds to this day. I must commend Mike; he has been very helpful in informing and educating me in my awareness of MS. Mike is involved in efforts to increase research funding for MS as well as to improve income security and access to age-appropriate long-term care, supportive housing and MS treatments. As a testament to Mike's tireless advocacy, he recently received the Citation of Merit last year. This is one of the MS Society's most distinguished awards.

I'd like to thank the MS Society and volunteers like Mike for making every day better for people living with MS and for working toward the day when we will find the end to this devastating disease.

I would like to urge Premier McGuinty to implement Bill 23, which would support people with MS and disabilities, from the member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

JOUR DES FRANCO-ONTARIENS ET DES FRANCO-ONTARIENNES

M. Phil McNeely: J'étais fier de l'adoption du projet de loi 24 en troisième lecture le 26 avril. Cette loi confirme officiellement que les Franco-Ontariens et les Franco-Ontariennes peuvent se donner rendez-vous pour célébrer leur culture de façon particulière ce jour-là.

Le 25 septembre coïncide avec l'anniversaire du drapeau franco-ontarien, hissé pour la première fois il y a 35 ans. Cette fête doit être partagée par tous et toutes en Ontario. Ce fut un rassemblement d'anglophones et de francophones qui a donné la vie à notre province et à notre pays. La francophonie vibre depuis 400 ans et a grandement contribué au façonnement de notre province.

Le français est parlé dans des milliers de foyers partout en Ontario, y compris un grand nombre dans ma circonscription d'Ottawa-Orléans. On entend le français dans des boutiques, des restaurants, des centres communautaires, des bureaux, des églises, des écoles, partout où les gens se rassemblent.

Cette loi témoigne de l'appui et de l'encouragement que notre gouvernement accorde à nos vibrantes communautés. Cet appui va bien au-delà du rassemblement des anglophones et des francophones. Nous avons accueilli des millions de gens de partout dans le monde. Ce fut toutefois ce rassemblement qui a lancé un si beau et si grand projet. Voilà pourquoi je suis fier de voir une telle journée rendant hommage aux contributions des

Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes. L'Ontario serait très différent et appauvri en l'absence du riche héritage franco-ontarien. J'ai hâte de célébrer, le 25 septembre, avec les anglophones et les francophones de ma circonscription.

ENERGY RATES

Mrs. Julia Munro: Families throughout my riding will be facing much higher hydro prices over the next year thanks to the Dalton McGuinty government. Energy experts are telling us that by the end of 2011, the average residential hydro bill is going to go up 26% per year. This works out to a minimum of \$304 per year for the average homeowner.

Eight per cent of the increase is due to the harmonized sales tax that the Liberal government will impose on everyone on July 1. This will cost \$98 per year for the average household. Generation cost increases will mean more than a \$150-per-year increase; smart meters, \$50 more per year—and these are just the estimated costs by the end of 2011.

My constituents cannot afford these increases, increases that come without a plan to ensure a secure supply of energy. The McGuinty Liberals have cancelled new nuclear power plants, they are planning to close coal plants, and they have no idea how they will make up the power we need. Everyone will need to pay more for hydro, and the supply will not even be secure.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr. David Orazietti: Sault Ste. Marie is moving forward with another exciting investment in the renewable energy sector. Last Friday, I had the privilege of being part of a groundbreaking for a new \$6-million solar manufacturing plant. This means that right here in Ontario and in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie, with our government's investments in the green energy sector through our Green Energy Act, we will not only have one of the largest solar farms in Canada, but we will now be creating jobs and manufacturing those solar panels in my community.

The \$2.5 million in provincial funding for this manufacturing plant was provided through what has been a very instrumental program for northern Ontario's economy, and is something our government has embraced and continued to improve and increase since 2003. It's called the enterprise north job creation program of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. This program helps to build strong and prosperous northern communities that foster opportunity, job creation and economic prosperity. This is a great program, as it has helped to build and accelerate numerous projects in our community in partnership with our renewable energy strategy and our standard offer program, projects like the \$400-million Brookfield wind farm project, the largest in Ontario; the \$135million cogeneration plant at Essar Steel; and the \$100million Starwood solar energy farm, which is the first phase of the 60-megawatt project.

We are growing green energy jobs through our government's leading-edge renewable energy strategy, and this is good news for all Ontarians.

POLICE WEEK

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I rise in the House today to acknowledge the start of a very special week in London, Police Week, where each day police officers engage in community outreach.

To kick off Police Week, two students were selected to play chief of police for the day. Scott Mitchell and Valerie Nyhout are secondary students who are also Special Olympics athletes. They were exposed to the dynamic and challenging role of heading the London police force, and they learned quite a bit in the process. Not only did they tour police headquarters, but they visited the Ontario Police College in Aylmer and the CSI lab as well.

The week continues with the London police holding a free barbecue for senior citizens at the Kiwanis senior citizens' centre. There will also be a series of fun and educational activities throughout the week.

I commend the London police for their activities in order to engage the community. I also want to say thanks for the work of our law enforcement officials that makes London a thriving and diverse society and a wonderful place to live.

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EVENTS IN ESSEX

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I'd like to just take a minute or two of your time to tell you about the great things that are happening in the riding of Essex. Of course, we're coming into the growing season, so just before we get out of here in June, I hope to have even better things to say.

Today I want to talk about health care, and I want to say what great things our government has done on my behalf and on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Essex in that we have a great family health team that has been up and running in Harrow, a hamlet in the town of Essex, where they are attracting doctors and taking care of patients who needed the kind of holistic health care that we well deserve.

As well, there's a family health team functioning in the town of Amherstburg. They, too, have been a great asset to their community. I frequently get letters and calls thanking us for putting a health team in the municipality of Amherstburg.

Then, more recently, we have had two nurse practitioner clinics approved for the riding of Essex, and I thank Minister of Health Deb Matthews for that. We have one that's only weeks away from opening in the town of Belle River, which is part of Lakeshore, and we have one that's well under way and, by fall, will be opening in the town of Essex.

The folks in my part of the country appreciate the health care they're being given.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LES ORGANISATIONS SANS BUT LUCRATIF

Ms. Aggelonitis moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-forprofit corporations / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les organisations sans but lucratif.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The minister for a short statement.

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I will make my statement during ministerial statements.

EDUCATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (ELECTRONIC SEXUAL MATERIAL), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À L'ÉDUCATION (DOCUMENTS ÉLECTRONIQUES À CARACTÈRE SEXUEL)

Mr. Martiniuk moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 66, An Act to protect our children from pornography / Projet de loi 66, Loi visant à protéger nos enfants contre la pornographie.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I would like to thank my constituent Rob Nickel, a former retired police officer, who brought to my attention that there are hundreds of libraries and schools in Ontario that do not use filtering equipment to block pornography for our children.

If I may use the précis of the explanatory note, which is rather long and I'll shorten it, the bill amends the Education Act and the Libraries Act to require every school board and library to ensure that they have in place technological measures on all of the computers to which a person under the age of 18 has access to block any material, including written material, pictures and recordings, that is obscene or sexually explicit or that constitutes child pornography.

ARTHUR MEEN

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in remembrance of the late Arthur Meen.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed. The member from Beaches-East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I hadn't realized I was supposed to go first.

It is an honour for me to rise and talk about Arthur Meen, who in fact was one of my predecessors. He came from the riding of York East and he represented that riding very well. York East—of course, the majority of that riding in those days was in the municipality or borough of East York.

He has quite a colourful history in our place, but I think most of it can be summed up best in his incredible election successes. He ran, he won, he was successful. He won with big majorities.

I think the biggest surprise to East Yorkers overall was the time that he was challenged by the beloved reeve and mayor of East York, True Davidson. Anybody who knows anything about politics in the Toronto area will remember True. She was East York's first mayor and she was sort of an icon in the community. She was invincible. Every time she ran for politics, she won with bigger and bigger majorities. She decided to take on Arthur Meen, she running as a Liberal, he as a Conservative. On election night—it surprised many people—Arthur Meen whomped her. He beat her by a huge majority. People looked upon him on that day as the giant and the giant-killer, all rolled into one.

He was beloved by the people of East York, and he took his job very seriously. He was a parliamentarian who rose through the ranks in this House, starting first of all as a backbencher. He went on to become a parliamentary assistant and ended up as Minister of Revenue. I want to talk mostly about when he was Minister of Revenue, because I think that's when he made his finest contribution, not only to the people of York East but to literally all the people who lived in Ontario, particularly our seniors.

He was the one, as Minister of Revenue, who brought forward two really important laws. The first one was the Ontario homebuyers grant program. The second one, and I think probably the one that best survives him and all of this House, is the guaranteed annual income system for seniors, also known as Gains. He was the one who shepherded that bill through this House and made it law, and it's still there today.

I know many MPPs in this room hold tax clinics every year. We do that in the month of March for many of our seniors, and they come in. When the CGAs and other people who are expert at doing taxes get to the Gains portion, literally every single senior gets a rebate. Literally every single senior to this day gets helped with their income tax and has their taxes lowered. Literally almost every single one of them gets a rebate, and it's all thanks to the work of Arthur Meen all those years ago in shepherding Gains through.

He understood the need to ensure that Ontario's senior citizens were provided with an adequate level of financial support to provide for that life of dignity, and he made sure that it happened. His legacy is such that it continues to happen, and I hope will continue to happen for many years.

The government of the day acknowledged that Ontario's higher cost of living placed additional challenges on our seniors receiving old age security from the federal government. Meen observed, and I quote him: "Our senior citizens in Ontario were receiving inadequate support under the federal system, which is geared to the cost of living across Canada as a whole." He knew that Ontarians needed more, and he was the one to make sure it happened. This was a proactive step in the fight against poverty, and it provides an example to all of us of what this government and future governments can do when faced with the need for a solution to a national challenge.

Arthur Meen was also a man who loved his constituents and loved life around East York. He was a very proud member of the Todmorden branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. I don't know whether I followed in his footsteps, but I too am a very proud member of that branch. The members of the branch speak fondly of his association over the years with the branch and his love of the Royal Canadian Legion and the people who attend.

To the family: I thank you for the time that you allowed him to afford to come here and work in this Legislature. I thank you for his many contributions, and I thank you for the legacy he left for all Ontarians.

Mr. Mario Sergio: It is with pleasure that I rise to bring a tribute to the House today to an extremely popular parliamentarian, the Honourable Arthur Kenneth Meen, QC.

Arthur was a resident of the riding of Willowdale. He was first elected to the Legislature in 1967 as MPP for York East and faithfully served for some 10 years.

I have a bit of an anecdote. In 1967 I was part of an organization of some 40 to 45 agents, and in the morning we were told to be at this big meeting. Everybody had to be there that particular evening, and there would be lots of food, lots of drinks. So at 7 o'clock I show up on Dufferin, north of Rogers Road, and there was a little table there and a couple of ladies taking names, addresses and my signature, of course. Some four days later I got a letter in the mail and I opened it up and there was the PC membership for Ontario. I have to say that the candidate who was chosen that particular evening was running against another wonderful former parliamentarian, David Lewis, and of course he didn't win.

But getting back to Arthur, he was a lawyer and an engineer by trade and he started his political life in municipal politics in the old borough of North York, the former city of North York. He was a devoted husband to his wife, Shirley, and father to three daughters. Arthur was a keen outdoorsman who often voiced his enjoyment of waterskiing, boating, snowmobiling, camping and fishing. When it came to fishing, he always would say that the big one got away. He jokingly would admit that it was because of his lack of proficiency in sports.

Arthur served on many committees and was appointed parliamentary assistant to the Treasurer of Ontario in 1972, Minister of Revenue in 1974 and Minister of Correctional Services as well. As the Minister of Revenue, he was responsible for initiating and instituting many important tax reforms; for example, the Gains program, the non-resident land transfer tax and the land speculation tax, to name but a few.

A man of principle who stood up for human rights, especially when it came to pro-life, he was not afraid to

voice his beliefs.

A highly distinguished, respected politician, when Arthur declared he would no longer seek re-election, then-Premier Davis expressed deep regrets and encouraged Arthur to retain his cabinet responsibilities for as long as he could. In 1980, Attorney General Roy McMurtry appointed Arthur judge of the criminal division in the

provincial court of York county.

Arthur passed away peacefully in 2008. On behalf of all of us in the House, I would express our sincere feelings to the family members. Let me say that as proud and privileged members of this House, we serve the people of Ontario and it is good to remember, to know and to appreciate those who came before us and the immense, positive, everlasting contribution they have made to the people of Ontario. I have to say that Arthur Meen was one of them.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I am honoured to stand on behalf of the PC caucus and participate in this tribute to Arthur Meen, who served in this Legislature between 1967 and 1977. He was re-elected in 1971 and 1975. My friend Michael Prue talked about his electability. He was elected by a large margin in 1967 and re-elected in 1971 and 1975 by large margins. Even in 1975, when the government of the day was reduced to a minority, Arthur Meen was one of those members who held his position and still had a very strong majority as well.

It's been said he was an engineer and a lawyer. It is interesting because I only know of one other member in this Legislature who has been an engineer and a lawyer, and that is a current member, my friend Norm Sterling from Carleton-Mississippi Mills. He holds that distinction along with Arthur Meen.

Arthur was married; his wife was Shirley, and she has also passed on. They had three daughters: Elizabeth, Jennifer and Marilyn.

Before he was elected to the Legislature, he had a distinguished career with Gulf Oil, and he also served on the municipal council of North York between 1961 and 1969. Of course, no one in the House today served with Arthur Meen, but he did serve at a time when my father served in this House. It was certainly a different time in this Legislature, as any of those who have had parents or relatives that have served in that time will know.

I did have the opportunity to speak to Premier William Davis to ask him some questions about Arthur Meen, because obviously he was a member of Premier Davis's government. As Premier Davis put it, he was a man of obvious competence—unassuming competence—a very humble and modest man, but visibly capable. He possessed a quiet sense of humour. As I said, he was very modest when it came to matters involving himself.

His positive qualities were readily identified and apparent to Premier Davis, who appointed him to cabinet as Minister of Revenue in 1974 and, in 1977, as Minister of Correctional Services. Working with the then treasurer. Darcy McKeough, he brought in the first homebuyers grant, designed to stimulate the housing market at a time when it was weak and to offer first-time homebuyers a bit of a leg-up when it came to purchasing their

At the same time, he played a role in introducing the land transfer tax that sought to put a stop to the speculation that was going on in the market and thereby driving up prices unnecessarily. Arthur Meen was the Minister of Revenue when that happened.

As my friend from Beaches-East York said, he was instrumental in the Gains program. I noticed in an interview he gave after he retired that he talked about the Gains program. He remembered that the Honourable John White was the chairman of the select committee on taxation in 1968, when they first talked about it, and he said, "I remember turning to him and saying, 'What in the world is negative income tax?' And he said, 'Well, it's flow in the opposite direction, based on that person's lack of income.' Now you see, we've come a long way. It was interesting that by the time we got Gains got enacted, he was the Treasurer and I was the Minister of Revenue.' He was proud of that particular program.

He was very well loved by his constituents, as Mr. Davis told me. Also, Jan Wescott, who was Arthur's EA for years, described him as the "most honest person" he ever knew—and not just from the point of view that he didn't steal or lie. He was so intellectually honest in everything that he did and in every way that he carried out his duties.

He embraced technology and believed in it. He was a lifetime ham radio operator, and while on council in North York, he pushed for hydro lines to be embedded in the ground as opposed to on poles. He led that charge, and North York was one of the first communities to enact

He cherished his time with his family on Georgian Bay, and considered those moments as moments of peace and serenity. When he retired, he went back to practising law, and as Mr. Sergio alluded to, he was then appointed a provincial court judge.

I'm thankful for the opportunity to pay tribute to Arthur Meen and to men like him who came before us and made a tremendous sacrifice of their personal life and their family life to serve in this Legislature, to serve their constituents and to serve all of us in the province of Ontario. So I say to all relatives of Arthur today, thank you for his contribution. We're proud of him and we are proud to offer this tribute today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to thank all members for participating in the tribute to Arthur Meen. On behalf of the Ontario Legislature, I will ensure that copies of the Hansard and a DVD of today's proceedings are sent to the family.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I'm honoured to rise in the House today to introduce significant new legislation that would modernize and strengthen Ontario's not-for-profit sector. Today, our government is introducing the new Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010, which, if passed, would provide a modern legal framework for not-for-profit corporations.

Not-for-profit corporations make a remarkable contribution to building a stronger Ontario. The not-for-profit sector comprises approximately 16% of all employed Ontarians. The work of not-for-profit corporations and volunteers generates approximately \$50 billion in annual revenues. So the work of Ontario's not-for-profit sector is vital, innovative and critical to Ontario's present

and future well-being.

The current Corporations Act governs the incorporation, governance and dissolution of not-for-profit corporations. It was first enacted in 1907 and has not been substantially updated since 1953. Our partners in the sector have told us that it is cumbersome, antiquated and does not adequately meet the needs of Ontario's not-for-profit sector. Reform is necessary to bring the legislation up to date and create a modern legal framework that supports today's vast, varied and rapidly growing not-for-profit sector.

There are approximately 46,000 not-for-profit corporations incorporated under the current act. Examples of not-for-profit corporations include: daycare centres, environmental groups, religious organizations, social service organizations, social clubs, sports clubs, business and professional associations, arts organizations and health organizations. That is why our government is moving to modernize and strengthen the not-for-profit sector as part of our Open Ontario plan to create new opportunities for jobs and growth.

The new Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, if passed,

would be easier to use and would strengthen corporate governance. Here are some of the reforms we are pro-

posing:

First, our proposed new act would simplify the incorporation process. The process is currently complex and lengthy. It normally takes six to eight weeks to incorporate. The new act would provide a simpler, more streamlined process and would allow not-for-profit corporations to incorporate in approximately seven working days or less. It would also provide flexibility to phase in electronic registration options, including online incorporation.

Second, our new act would enhance corporate governance and accountability. Directors would have a statutory duty of care and a maximum term of office of three years without being re-elected.

Third, our proposed changes would enhance member democracy. It would expand member rights by providing greater transparency for financial statements and access to records and would require notice to be given to a member when disciplinary action is contemplated against that member.

Fourth, our proposed changes would provide directors and officers better protection from personal liability. This would help to attract qualified people to serve on not-forprofit boards.

Fifth, in specified circumstances, the act would provide a simpler financial review process in place of an

audit.

Sixth, our new act would allow not-for-profit corporations to engage in commercial activities when the revenues are reinvested in the corporation in support of its not-for-profit purposes.

Seventh, our proposed changes would become consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions with modern legislation, such as the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act and Saskatchewan's Non-profit Corporations Act, 1995.

Our new act would substantially modernize the not-for-profit sector and make doing business easier in today's marketplace. Our ministry consulted extensively with the not-for-profit sector, the legal sector and affected ministries. Three consultation papers were developed to gather opinions. We listened to feedback from over 200 partners on the proposed new act in Ottawa, London, Toronto and Thunder Bay. The ministry also formed a web advisory panel to engage in an online consultation with key partners on preliminary policy recommendations.

Our ministry received positive feedback from our partners for taking the initiative to modernize this act. Our move to modernize and strengthen the not-for-profit sector demonstrates that we are serious about ensuring that Ontario is a leading business law jurisdiction in North America.

Furthermore, the proposed new act would support the government's Open for Business initiative by streamlining operational and administrative requirements and

processing applications more efficiently.

The proposed new act would also align with Ontario's poverty reduction strategy by facilitating the operations of those not-for-profit corporations which focus on improving housing, education, food and employment assistance.

In closing, I'd like to underscore that we are serious about supporting not-for-profit corporations by creating a new legal framework that responds to the reality of the 21st century. We are working together to modernize and strengthen Ontario's not-for-profit sector so that they can continue to provide invaluable support to the people of this province.

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very pleased and honoured to rise in the House today to recognize

International Nurses Day. Ontario is so very blessed to have dedicated, knowledgeable, innovative and highly skilled nurses. Indeed, Ontario's nurses are the best in the world.

Nurses are often the first faces patients see when they enter the health system through an emergency room or a clinic. They're the ones on the front line, supplying their knowledge and expertise when patients are feeling their most vulnerable. Nurses play a vital role in offering care everywhere in the health care system—in acute-care settings as well as throughout the community.

Let me share with you some of the highlights of how I'm spending Nursing Week. On Monday morning I had the pleasure of visiting the riding of Essex, where the member Bruce Crozier and I visited what will soon be a fully operational nurse-practitioner-led clinic. I had the pleasure of meeting two nurse practitioners while I was in Essex county: Lisa Ekblad, the lead for the Belle River nurse-practitioner-led clinic, and Allan McCallum, the lead for the Essex county nurse-practitioner-led clinic. We announced the call for proposals for the next wave of 14 new nurse practitioner clinics. Once the final round of clinics has been chosen, we will have 25 clinics like the one in Essex all over the province.

On Monday afternoon I participated in Take Your MPP to Work Day at the McCormick long-term-care home in London. Yesterday, I was at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre's Holland Orthopaedic and Arthritic Centre, where two registered nurse surgical first assists, Grace Groetzsch and Victoria Rennick, showed me how they prepare their patients for surgery and then follow them right throughout the entire process. Tonight, I'll be celebrating at the nursing secretariat's 10th anniversary gala with Vanessa Burkoski, our provincial chief nursing officer. The rest of the week will include even more

opportunities to spend time with nurses.

I'd like to briefly highlight the Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario's outreach program involving experienced cancer care nurses. Many of POGO's finest are with us today in the east gallery. First, let me thank Karen Drybrough, Interlink team leader, and her fellow pediatric Interlink nurses Dianne Dekkers, Marilyn Cassidy and Margaret Warden. The pediatric Interlink program provides nurses who support children with cancer and their families during hospital visits, home visits and telephone calls. These nurses help to ensure the holistic range of needs of the child and the family are met, both in the hospital and at home in the community. From reviewing a child's diagnosis and treatment plan with the family and caregivers to arranging the necessary supports and services, these nurses are there throughout the process. This is just one example of a nursing program that is providing extraordinary care, and there are countless others throughout our province. POGO's Bruna DiMonte is also here today. In addition to her work at POGO, Bruna practises at Sick Kids as an oncology nurse. Welcome, and thank you all for the difference you make.

As a government, we have worked hard to support and enhance the opportunities and skills of nurses to

maximize their contribution to the care of patients. It's part of our government's goal to ensure that nurses are using more of their skills to take on more diverse roles within our health care system. Yesterday, I shared news at Sunnybrook hospital that our government is providing nearly \$4 million to permanently fund 100% of the equivalent of 34 full-time registered nurse surgical first assist positions. Surgical first assist nurses will now be able to continue offering their skills in operating rooms to further improve patient access and outcomes.

These are just a few of the many investments we've made in supporting and enhancing the role of nurses. In fact, the government has invested over \$900 million in nursing initiatives since 2003. I'm very pleased to share that more than 10,000 new nursing positions have been created in Ontario since the McGuinty government took office in 2003. Well over 900 of those positions were created in the fiscal year 2009-10, exceeding our goal for the year.

We're very, very fortunate in this province to have a workforce of nurses always ready to deliver their best. That's why we're committed to continue working hard to give our best to Ontario's nurses each and every day.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to be able to offer a few comments today on the new Not-for-Profit Corporations Act being introduced.

One of the things that is most important for non-profits as well as for for-profits is the principle of transparency and accountability, and just as much for non-profits as for the rest of the corporate world.

In the few moments that I have had to hear the minister and the comments she's made, there are a couple of things that I would want to identify. One is that sometimes there has been a fuzzy line between not-forprofit and for-profit activities, and I notice that this is something that this bill purports to address.

Also, because we live in a world where there's more and more fundraising done and more and more creation of not-for-profit organizations, people want to know the distinction between the administration and the front-line service. They want to know that their dollars are being well used, and it's that kind of accountability and transparency that people will be looking for.

The minister made some reference to the variety of organizations. I would just like to comment on how important it is to recognize the variety of sectors. In the comments she made with regard to hearing from others, I would note and I would hope that this also includes some consultation within the rural communities of this province, because there's virtually nothing that happens of consequence—quite frankly, if you ask people in their communities what things add the most to their quality of life in their community, it's provided by volunteers. So I would hope that there has been some recognition of some

of the very special issues that rural communities face in this.

I'd also hope that in this piece of legislation, we're looking at the ability to do a better job on questions of duplication, overlap and financial stability. People are willing—and I think it's a most important point to make—to step forward and take on a voluntary role in their community. Frankly, it's one of the defining characteristics of Canadians. We do volunteer more than people in other countries, but at the same time, as government, we owe them the opportunity to be able to perform what it is they wish to do in the voluntary sector without those problems of duplication and overlap that so often cover this.

Finally, I would just comment that the minister has referred to this important step as part of Open for Business in Ontario, and I guess I'm left to conclude that that implies that Ontario has been closed.

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm very pleased to rise on behalf of the PC caucus today to recognize today as International Nurses Day and this week as Nursing Week. This week offers the opportunity to showcase nurses' knowledge, skills and compassion, as well as the demands of their daily work.

I'd like to begin by offering my congratulations to all of Ontario's nurses for the hard work they do, and to express how appreciated and valued the dedication, caring, compassion and professionalism which they show to their patients each day truly are.

Nurses are an integral part of our health care system and I'm happy to have the time to celebrate today the profession of nursing and, for the remainder of the week, how we're going to be celebrating through community events. Today I had the opportunity to visit Kensington Place here in Toronto with RNAO president David McNeil. As I speak today, our leader, Tim Hudak, is touring the labour and delivery unit at Women's College Hospital with RNAO executive director Doris Grinspun and RN Adele Page.

Many of us are going to be visiting various community events and experiencing the role of nurses in our ridings during this week, and I encourage all of the members of this House to pay close attention when they do go on the rounds with the nurses to experience the hard work and dedication that all of our nurses show. I think that all of us in this Legislature have a lot to learn.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak briefly today, Mr. Speaker.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to respond to the minister's statement on the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010. I just received it, so I really haven't had a chance to even look at it. But for a long time, the not-for-profit sector has been an integral part in delivering services to Ontario

communities, services that government at times has been unable or unwilling to provide. However, in many cases, these initiatives are overwhelmingly understaffed and under-resourced, and depend largely on volunteer efforts to ensure that their communities get the services they need.

New Democrats are open to working with the government to ensure that our not-for-profit partners are better equipped to carry out the work they do, and hope that this piece of legislation is the beginning of a new partnership with these organizations. We look forward to the opportunity to review the bill and hope that the government is committed to working with opposition members on this side of the House to ensure that this bill effectively addresses the concerns of the sector.

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm pleased to rise today to talk about International Nurses Day, la journée internationale des infirmiers. In the past, people would talk about healers, doctors, medicine men, nurses, but since the beginning of time, many of those communities basically said that those people were gifted—they had the gift of helping people heal.

I've had the opportunity in my career to have worked alongside thousands of nurses. They were all competent. Some were good, some were excellent, and some had the gift—the gift of nursing. They had a special talent. For them, nursing was almost a calling. It was something that they had always wanted to do, and this is what they wanted to be. I don't know how to describe it in words, but when I saw one of those nurses, I could identify them: They had the gift. I want to name a few of those nurses who have crossed paths with me.

The first one is Lysanne Dugré. I went to high school with Lysanne. Lysanne became a nurse and decided to go and work in developing countries. She has put thousands and thousands of kilometres on her motorbike, carrying a backpack full of Thermoses holding vaccines, and she has vaccinated and immunized thousands of children in Haiti and Africa.

I want to talk about Nancy Foreman. Nancy Foreman was my boss when I was on the intensive rehab unit, and she went on to become the director of care at Extendicare Falconbridge, then Extendicare York. Nancy had a love for the elderly. She had a way of making them feel special, and that made all the difference.

I want to talk about Michael Raymond. Michael is the most patient person I have ever met. Michael went and worked as a nurse in the Far North and spent most of his time working in First Nation Inuit communities. He is now a nurse practitioner. His wife, Lise Raymond, is also a very special nurse. She knows more about alternative medicine than most, and her work with menopausal women is inspiring.

I want to talk about Patricia Plourde. Every cell in her body was made to be a nurse. This person is a nurse in everything that she does. She went back to university and became a nurse practitioner, and she continues to provide the good nursing care that, to me, she was put on this earth to do.

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I want to talk about Christine Mathieu. Christine is an RPN in Gogama. She has a sense of humour and a sense of optimism that is hard to beat. For her, it's not because something is serious that it has to be stressful. And if there is a hard injection to give, call Christine; she'll get it done.

I want to talk about Stephanie Semesin. Stephanie is a new nurse who works in dialysis at Sudbury Regional Hospital.

I wanted to talk—I see that I'm running out of time—about Lorraine Leblanc, who started the homeless clinic in Sudbury and saw a need for homeless people, when people laughed at her and said there were no homeless

people in Sudbury.

I will leave you with some words from Melodie Chenevert, who is an author and a nurse. She says: "Being a nurse means you carry immense responsibility and very little authority. You step into people's lives and make a difference. Some bless you; others curse you. You see people at their worst and at their best. You see life begin and end. You see people's capacity for love, courage and endurance."

Nurses are the heart and soul of health care.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario provided to me by Preston Medical Pharmacy and Langs Pharmacy, which reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is downloading hundreds of millions in health care costs to Ontario pharmacists and consumers; and

"Whereas pharmacists are valued health professionals in private practice and cannot sustain present service

levels under these conditions; and

"Whereas many smaller pharmacies will close and larger ones will have to drastically cut valued services; and

"Whereas this attack on pharmacies is just one example of the McGuinty government's program of cutting health care in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-

bly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I agree with this petition and affix my name thereto.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: I've got a petition here from students at Cairine Wilson high school.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its 2007 report, concluded that without dramatic reductions in human-induced carbon dioxide emissions, climate change may bring 'abrupt and irreversible effects on oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species'; and

"Whereas no one group, country or continent is responsible for climate change, but where all human beings are collectively responsible for solving the problem; and

"Whereas the production of greenhouse gases in Canada has increased by 27% over 1990 levels; and

"Whereas our elected leaders have a responsibility to report to the public on their actions with respect to halting climate change for the sake of accountability; and

"Whereas youth in particular have a special interest in this issue, being those that will inherit this earth, our only home;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change."

I will sign this petition. Jesse Scott, Ben Gledhill and Jonathan Murrin have also signed it.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mrs. Julia Munro: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy now."

As I am in agreement, I've affixed my signature to give it to page Joshua.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury, and it goes as follows:

"Whereas a company's resumption of production with replacement workers during a legal strike puts undue tensions and divisions on a community; and

"Whereas anti-replacement legislation in other provinces has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of replacement workers during a strike."

I fully support this petition, would like to add "as soon as possible," and send it to the clerks' table with Emma.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas multiple sclerosis ... is a debilitating disease affecting a great number of people in Ontario; and

"Whereas there has been a new treatment discovery called the liberation treatment, which addresses chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency ... and that has been seen to provide relief for many MS sufferers,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario invest in research regarding this new treatment and make it available to victims of MS in Ontario as a listed procedure in a timely manner."

Since I agree with this petition, I will sign it and send it to the table with page Yidu.

TAXATION

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the province of Ontario collects a provincial sales tax (PST) and the federal government of Canada collects a goods and services tax (GST) and the current government of Ontario is proposing to merge the two taxes into a single harmonized sales tax (HST); and

"Whereas the proposed harmonized sales tax does provide some benefits to business in Ontario; and

"Whereas this new tax will result in provincial taxes being charged on a large number of items and services where it is not currently charged; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario have absorbed a number of new and increased taxes despite Dalton McGuinty's promises that such tax increases would not be implemented, and have therefore seen their disposable income drop accordingly; and

"Whereas these additional taxes will result in increased taxes paid by Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to immediately rescind their existing plan and initiate a joint process with the federal government to reconsider the proposed harmonized sales tax, with special consideration for matching existing tax-exempt items and services, in order to ensure that any changes to tax policy do not further increase taxes paid and revenue collected."

I agree with this petition and I'll sign my name to it, and I'll pass it to my page, Katina.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Algoma-Manitoulin:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients under" certain conditions; and

"Whereas" since "October 2009, insured PET scans" are "performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;"

They petition "the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature to it and send it to the table with page Stig.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Joe Dickson: This is a petition referencing lowering drug prices.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontarians pay more for popular generic drugs for diabetes, high blood pressure and other common health issues than patients in other jurisdictions; and

"Whereas Ontarians deserve fair prescription drug prices so that families and seniors are not charged more than those in other countries; and

"Whereas some members of the opposition have sided with large corporations to preserve the status quo rather than make prescription medications more affordable for Ontario patients by supporting the proposed drug reforms;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians by passing the government's legislation to lower the cost of prescription medications."

I attach my signature to it and I shall pass it on to Dylan.

TAXATION

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again on Canada Day 2010 with his new 13% combined GST, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's new 13% combined GST will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as: coffee, newspapers and magazines, courier fees, gas at the pumps, home heating oil and electricity, postage stamps, haircuts, dry cleaning, home renovations, veterinary care, arena ice and soccer field rentals, Internet fees, massage therapy, funerals, condo fees ... bus fares, golf green fees, gym fees, snowplowing, bicycles, taxi fares, train fares, domestic air travel, accountant and legal services, and real estate commissions and theatre admissions;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government recognize Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I will provide a copy of that to page Emma.

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POWER PLANT

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition from the good people in Oakville.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the province of Ontario, through the Ontario Energy Board, has selected a location for a gas-fired electrical generating power station within three kilometres of 16 schools and more than 11,000 homes; and

"Whereas the Oakville-Clarkson airshed is already one of the most polluted in Canada; and

"Whereas no independent environmental assessment has been completed for this proposed building location; and

"Whereas Ontario has experienced a significant reduction in demand for electrical power; and

"Whereas a recent accident at a power plant in Connecticut demonstrated the dangers that nearby residents face;

"We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to immediately rescind the existing plan to build a power plant at or near the current planned location on ... Royal Windsor Drive in Oakville and initiate a complete review of area power needs and potential building sites, including environmental assessments and a realistic assessment of required danger zone buffer areas."

I agree with this petition. I'm pleased to sign it and pass it to my page, Katina.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly that has been sent to me by many of the good people in western Mississauga. I would especially like to thank Louise Frenette of Tenth Line. It reads as follows:

"Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the ongoing capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

"Whereas 'day surgery' procedures could better be performed in a dedicated facility. Such an ambulatory surgery centre would greatly increase the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, reduce wait times ... and free up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in" this year's "capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

I completely agree with this petition. I'm pleased to affix my signature and to ask page Mary to carry it for

me.

TAXATION

Mrs. Julia Munro: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government's plan to harmonize the PST and the GST will result in Ontario taxpayers paying 8% more for a multitude of products and services:

"Whereas the 8% tax increase will increase the cost of services such as housing and real estate services, gasoline, hydro bills, home heating fuel, Internet and cable bills, haircuts, gym memberships, legal services, construction and renovations, car repairs, plumbing and electrical services, landscaping services, leisure activities, hotel rooms, veterinary services for the family pet and even funeral services; and

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers cannot afford this tax grab—particularly in the middle of a recession;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government of Ontario to abandon the sales tax increase announced in the 2009 budget."

I will sign this, as I am in agreement, and give it page Jacob.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. John Yakabuski: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1-billion eHealth scandal; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government is now cutting front-line public health care that will:

"—put independent pharmacies at risk;

"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery; and

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems; and

"Whereas, less than a year ago, Premier McGuinty supported expanding the responsibilities of pharmacists as a more cost-effective way to shorten wait times and enhance access to care; and

"Whereas the loss of a pharmacy in rural communities will mean an increased dependence on emergency rooms and family doctors, resulting in longer wait times and reduced access to care;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I support this petition, affix my signature to it and send it with Katina.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition directed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is downloading hundreds of millions of dollars in health care costs to Ontario pharmacists and consumers; and

"Whereas pharmacists are valued health professionals in private practice and cannot sustain present service levels under these conditions; and

"Whereas many smaller pharmacies will close and larger ones will have to drastically cut valued services; and

"Whereas this attack on pharmacies is just one example of the McGuinty government's program of cutting health care in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

As I agree with this petition, I affix my name thereto and will provide it to Jacob.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ACCOUNTING PROFESSIONS ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR LES PROFESSIONS COMPTABLES

Mr. Bentley moved third reading of the following bill: Bill 158, An Act to repeal and replace the statutes governing The Certified General Accountants Association of Ontario, the Certified Management Accountants of Ontario and The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario / Projet de loi 158, Loi visant à abroger et à remplacer les lois régissant l'Association des comptables généraux accrédités de l'Ontario, les Comptables en management accrédités de l'Ontario et l'Institut des comptables agréés de l'Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Debate? Hon. Christopher Bentley: At the outset, I can indicate that I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Willowdale.

I'd like to recognize and welcome in the gallery representatives from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario, Rod Barr and Chris May; from the Certified General Accountants of Ontario, Ted Wigdor; and from

the Certified Management Accountants of Ontario, Sharon Armstrong and Katharine Harvey.

This is a very important piece of legislation for public protection, for the protection of those who use accountancy services, to ensure that the members who are represented by each of the bodies I have read out and that are contained in the act have the appropriate regulation and support in performing very essential accountancy services, and to ensure that the financial foundation of the province of Ontario is as strong as it needs to be. Economies rest on strong foundations. Part of that foundation is in financial services, and a key part of financial services is in accountancy.

At the same time, it's important to recognize what this bill is and what this bill is not. We have had in the province of Ontario statutes which govern three branches of the accountancy profession: chartered accountants, certified general accountants and certified management accountants. They are the only three branches of the accounting profession—however described, wherever certified—that are governed by statute in the province of Ontario. It is time to update those statutes because those statutes contain very important public protections. In some cases, the protections were inserted some decades ago, so we have been approached by the three branches of the profession about updating the public protection and regulation of these three branches of the accounting profession.

I want to make very clear what this bill does not do. It does not prevent, would not prevent, anybody from practising any form of accounting if they, today, can practise that form of accounting in the province of Ontario. It does not take away their ability to practise accounting in Ontario if they have that right to do so today. Wherever they obtained their training in the world—wherever—if they have the right today to perform that type of accounting, they'll be able to do it after the passage of Bill 158. It is as simple as that.

In many ways, accounting is one of the most open of the professions we have. We have been working very hard as a government to ensure the most openness for professions, no matter where people obtain their designations, training or degrees. It's important to recognize that nothing in this bill will prevent somebody from practising accounting in Ontario if they now can.

Let me just speak to the types of accounting that you can practise in the province of Ontario. Every member of this Legislature will remember that several years ago we came to a unanimous conclusion and put an end to the legislative debate over the practice of public accounting, often known as the accounting involving an audit function. We agreed that we should set up in the province of Ontario the Public Accountants Council, which would be able to determine who could practise public accounting. It was a very important step. The Legislature was unanimous, which doesn't always happen. The three branches of the profession, regulated by statute in Ontario, came together and we now have the Public Accountants

Council, which helps to determine who can practise public accounting—the auditing function, essentially—in Ontario. Nothing in this bill touches that—nothing.

What this bill does in updating those three branches of the profession governed by statute is update public protections such as the following: the licensing requirements; the ability of each of the bodies to inspect the books and records of their members; the ability of each of the bodies to reach in to an otherwise private practice to make sure the public interest is being protected, to make sure that people aren't representing themselves as holders of one of their licences who do not have the requisite training, who have been suspended or who have been subject to some discipline; in fact, the ability to subject people who are members of their associations to disciplinary hearings, where appropriate, and of course with the appropriate safeguards.

All of these ensure that the public is protected. The public is protected because when a member of the public goes to an accounting firm, chances are pretty good the member of the public is not an expert in accounting. That's why they're seeking out the expert. So you're looking for the appropriate degree of public protection.

There has been some discussion about the use of certain words, initials and designations obtained elsewhere. What the three statutes regulate are the use of designations in the province of Ontario. They do so to ensure that the public knows, when certain designations or letters or combinations of words are used, that they are subject to the restrictions inherent in the statute. You have three statutes, three bodies, three sets of public protections, and those are the only branches of accounting that have those statutory protections for the public. This bill is about updating, enhancing, modernizing and supporting those very public protections.

As a government, we will continue to look for ways to address any issue that might be a barrier, but there are no barriers erected by this bill. It is about modernizing the type of public protection, it is about taking the steps you would expect that a government would take to ensure that very important financial foundation, which is essential to a strong economy, essential to much of our daily life, has the provisions that 21st-century Ontario demands, not that 20th-century Ontario permitted. It is very much a modernization approach that everybody would expect that we have.

I want to thank the members of the three branches of the profession that I have outlined for asking that the additional burdens and protections be inserted, because they are responsibilities that their members will have, and they are powers that the three governing bodies will have to go in and inspect practices, inspect books and records, discipline, suspend and take relevant action—again, to protect the public interest.

There are a number of different provisions in the statutes, but I just conclude where I started: that this is about three branches of the profession, not more. It is about the three branches that are governed by their own statute in the province of Ontario. No other part of the

accounting profession has a statute governing it, governing a public interest, in the province of Ontario. None other has a direct statute governing it.

It's about updating those protections and those statutes, and there is nothing in this legislation that will prevent anybody from practising a form of accounting if today they have the right to do so. There is nothing in this bill that will stop anybody who has acquired their accounting services anywhere in the world from coming and setting up an accounting practice in the province of Ontario, either alone, in conjunction with others, in a business or in a firm, large or small; in any part of the province, urban, rural, north, south, east or west. They can do it. If they can do it now, they'll be able to do it when the bill is passed. There's no change whatsoever. That is pretty open.

This is the right thing to do; it's the right step to take.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. David Zimmer: I'm pleased to take part in the third reading of Bill 158.

Members of the House will recall that the bill replaces the three existing statutes that govern Ontario's chartered accountants, certified general accountants and certified management accountants. These are very large organizations. The three of them together include roughly 65,000 accountants and many thousands of student accountants. All three statutes are going to become public acts so that they're modern, transparent and suitable to the present and eventual role of these bodies in licensing public accountants.

In this respect, the Accounting Professions Act complements changes that we made a number of years ago, in 2004, with the Public Accounting Act. The Accounting Professions Act will balance the needs of the accounting profession and the public interest. It provides that all three bodies must govern their members in the public interest. The bill would ensure that all the designated accounting bodies in the province have the legal tools they need to oversee the members of their profession.

Two of the existing acts are very old. The CMA statute was originally passed in 1941. The Chartered Accountants Act dates from 1956, and it was based on a predecessor act going back to 1937. The CGAs have the most modern statute of the three, and even it is more than 25 years old. Administrative law has changed in that time, and administrative practices have changed. Bill 158 brings the accounting profession's governance into modern times, into modern administrative law practice protocols.

Some of the existing powers of the governing bodies would be expanded or clarified so that they can ensure a higher standard of professionalization in the way their members work for their clients. I'll give you some examples: the power to discipline former members for actions or omissions that occurred during the time of their membership; the power to verify the mental or physical capacity of a member to continue practising; the power to get custody over records of an incapable or

deceased member, of course with court permission, to protect the interests of a client that they had done work for. There's a duty to keep information acquired in the course of governance confidential, except as required to carry out statutory duties.

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In addition, all these three statutes in the bill ensure that a member of one of the accounting bodies or someone wishing to become a member or a client of a member can see in the statute itself the basic regulatory scheme. It provides in detail who is a member, how one can become a member, what are the powers of the governing body over that member and what kinds of subjects are covered in the bylaws. This is important information both for the members and for the public who are using accounting services.

We continue to be committed to working with our colleagues in the private sector to strengthen the governing of the accounting profession. The bill would also ensure public accountability by allowing public representatives to be added to the governing bodies of the certified general accountants and the certified management accountants. The chartered accountants already have public representatives on their council and have shown that this model really does encourage policies and administrative practices that benefit all Ontarians, as well as benefiting the accountants themselves.

The Accounting Professions Act, if passed, would create a clear structure for the governance of the key participants in our economy by setting out guidelines for standards and ensuring that there is public recourse when there are those rare but inevitable cases of professional misconduct. Just as an aside, in these very difficult economic times that we've experienced over the last few years, this is an essential element in ensuring public confidence in the accounting profession and its governance.

The proposed legislation would not impose new burdens on the accounting body, but it does confirm and make clear their powers and their obligations. It would also not impose any new additional requirements or burdens on clients, but again makes clear what the rules are for the accountants, for their governing body, and what the reasonable expectations of the public can be. In short, the bill helps ensure that accountants and their clients all know where they stand, and that the governing bodies can control the competence and the proper conduct of their members while at the same time treating those members fairly.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario, the Certified General Accountants of Ontario and the Certified Management Accountants of Ontario have all, collectively and individually, asked for these changes. They recognize that they need stronger tools. They need a clearer statement of how their governing protocols will work. This is in their best interest. This is in the best interest of the public. Regulation of professions in the first and in the last analysis is really about protection of the public. It would make the three main bodies accountable to the public and, as I've said a couple of times now,

give them those tools to govern their members. That's one of the key aspects of this piece of legislation.

It would also ensure greater transparency for the accounting profession. It's going to better protect the clients and it's going to ensure that each organization is working with the most modern and up-to-date set of administrative law and administrative practice tools.

Even more clearly, this act will clearly set out what members of the public can expect in terms of, if you will, quality controls that the accounting profession will impose on their members and oversee so that the public, unlike in some jurisdictions elsewhere, away from Ontario—down in the US, there were some problems with the accounting profession there that led to some of the economic trials and tribulations. This is shoring up the profession, again, to give them the tools so that those unfortunate circumstances don't happen again.

I should also say that here—in Ontario, Ontario prides itself on the quality of the accounting profession in Ontario. Ontario is also, as we all know, supporting the idea of a single securities regulator, and we're passionate about having it located here in Toronto. If Toronto and Ontario are going to become the centerpiece for securities regulation, a large piece of that regulation is the quality of the accounting services that are brought to bear on those issues. This modernization of the accounting profession, the clarification of the roles of the members of the governing bodies and what members of the public can expect, be they small, individual entrepreneurs operating a barbershop or a corner store, or someone operating a national or multinational company headquartered here in Toronto—we want to provide and we want to set the context for quality accounting services here. This is what this legislation is designed to do.

I'm very happy to have worked on this with the Attorney General and with members of the accounting profession over the past number of years to ensure that we introduce the very best possible legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Just briefly: I was a little surprised to hear the Attorney General talk in fairly succinct language about how things were not going to change in Ontario from the status quo. I listened very carefully, and I think what he said is accurate. However, he didn't say some other things: that there will be some variations in the degrees to which people can practise under the new regulations. I'll be speaking to the bill later, and I would perhaps spend some time talking about those degrees that are involved in the House in this particular bill. Even though in our party, we support the bill on second reading and will probably support the bill on third reading—that is a "probably"—we do have some serious concerns about the international aspects of this trade. I will speak to that more fully when it's my turn to speak.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Kormos: I was going to decline the chance for a two-minute question and comment on the comments by both the Attorney General and his parliamentary assistant because I will be speaking to this in short order.

Folks are indeed interested in Bill 158. Again, I'm sure Mr. Zimmer, the parliamentary assistant, will agree that we found it far more exciting and interesting than many anticipated at the outset. There was actually some stuff there, something to get our collective teeth into. I will be speaking to it. I'm probably going to praise him again in the second round.

I notice that the Attorney General has now thrown the ball clearly and thoroughly into his parliamentary assistant's court. Again, the PA does the heavy lifting. The Attorney General makes the glamorous announcement of third reading but leaves the more substantive stuff, the viscera, to his skilled parliamentary assistant. But the parliamentary assistant has big shoulders; he's got to. I understand how he grew them, because I've watched him here, coping like Atlas, bearing the world on his shoulders, as PA to the Attorney General.

We're not going to be necessarily in agreement. It's the 95.5% syndrome, and I'm grateful to at least one of the presenters for raising and expressing interest in the 95.5%. Ninety-five per cent of this bill is relatively benign from everybody's point of view. There's 5%, though, that remains problematic, and I know that in a very sort of roundabout way the parliamentary assistant has tried to address it. They're trying to pretend or give the impression that they're acknowledging that, but they won't meet it head-on, and I suppose that's the question I put to the PA, since he's left alone: Why not head-on, PA?

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I want to echo my friend from Welland's confidence in the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General. There is no doubt that he's a great member and that he's able to explain the details of the bill and defend it all the way.

As one of the members of this House, I heard a lot about Bill 158, but I didn't get a chance to sit on a committee to listen to deputations from many different people. Certainly, I got a lot of emails from people concerned about the bill, and I went to the Attorney General and he explained it to me. It was comforting to hear from him that the passage of the bill is not going to change the procedure and the practice of accounting in Ontario.

Also, I had the chance to speak to Chris May two weeks ago, and he explained the bill to me—why it's being introduced and why it's being debated.

I still have some concerns, especially in terms of the fine. The Attorney General and the parliamentary assistant didn't speak about this issue, which was brought to my attention by many different accountants from across the province of Ontario. As elected officials, we have to voice our concerns and we have to voice the concerns of our constituents.

There is no doubt about it: I'm a great supporter of the Attorney General and of Bill 158, because it's about time we modernized the bill and the accounting profession in the province of Ontario, to protect the people of Ontario. Also, we have to make sure that this bill is not going to create any barriers for anyone, but the Attorney General in his speech was giving me his assurance that this bill is not going to prohibit anyone from practising. Whether or not this bill passes, it's not going to change any of those practices.

So I'm here today and I'm looking forward to hearing what the opposition has to say about this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Questions and comments?

The member for Willowdale, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. David Zimmer: Again, I want to thank my colleague opposite and my colleague on this side of the House for their very kind remarks.

This accounting legislation with the three accounting bodies—the CAs, the CMAs and the CGAs—is something that I've had the privilege to work on now for a number of years since I've been at the Attorney General's office. I also did some work on the 2004 legislation that came before this House.

What I want to say, by way of compliment to the entire accounting profession, is that each of the accounting bodies here in Ontario worked with our government in a very professional way to ensure that we brought forward the very best piece of legislation. Those three accounting bodies are thoughtful and committed. They stand their ground and they all had ideas on what should be included in the legislation. Through a process of conversation and back-and-forth consideration of viewpoints, I think that we've come forward with the very best piece of legislation.

But I want to leave you with one thought: At all times in the discussions with those three accounting bodies, I can tell you that when an issue came up that revolved around the public interest here in Ontario and here in Canada, each of those accounting bodies put that public interest before any interest of their particular accounting bodies. That is commendable.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: This is an interesting debate. The Attorney General talked about how nothing is going to change, how no barriers are going to be erected. However, this bill attracted the attention of the British consul general. He had a meeting with the Attorney General over this particular bill and wrote the Attorney General a letter on March 19 of this year. I won't read the entire letter, but he said:

"We understand your desire to protect Ontario consumers of chartered accountancy services from confusion, although we have seen no evidence that such confusion really exists. Our experience suggests that consumers of chartered accountancy services are sophisticated rather than naive. They are not generally confused by the variety of chartered accountancy designations, and certainly not by those of international leaders, such as ACCA, CIMA"—both British designations—"and ICAEW"—EW standing for England and Wales. "We are not aware of any other WTO member or sub-federal jurisdiction outside Canada taking the same view as Ontario." I believe the World Trade Organization represents about 172 countries in the world. "I would suggest that the argument for the need to protect Ontario consumers is a distraction," says the British consul general in Toronto.

As one would expect from a British consul, he goes on to say, "I would therefore urge you to ensure that Bill 158, however it is ultimately drafted, gives you as Attorney General the power to designate certain organizations and their associated chartered accountancy designations as acceptable under Ontario law. Under such a provision you would then be in a position to designate organizations such as the ACCA, CIMA and other organizations (with permitted designations....)," and permit those organizations by indicating them as a CIMA (UK). That is his solution. He goes on to say a few other things but not relating to the solution of the problem.

We also have a letter from Deloitte and Touche, who point out, "However, we would like to express our concern about an overly restrictive clause within the bill, which will place internationally qualified professional accountants at a disadvantage when they immigrate to Ontario. Deloitte operates in an increasingly global environment and is actively engaged in employing internationally trained professionals who make a significant contribution to our global projects. Deloitte believes that this clause will act as an employment barrier, as it proposes a ban on the use of foreign professional designations on documents, including resumés, business cards and email signatures." However, when a company is tendering for business, they do allow for the use of the foreign designation.

It seems to me that Deloitte—and, I understand, KPMG as well—are concerned about the clause that limits foreign-trained professionals from entering into business in Ontario.

That, in conjunction with two other items, I would say—the first is that Canada and the European Union are looking at a comprehensive economic trade agreement, and those negotiations are ongoing as we speak. They have been progressing since May 2009 and are currently entering into negotiations on how a trade agreement between the European Union and Canada could take place. Certainly in a world that is becoming a smaller and smaller place all the time, these kinds of restrictions that are placed on foreign-designated professionals—and after all, that's what they are; they are foreign-designated professionals—would create some difficulty in those negotiation.

Canada, as a matter of interest, is the third-largest customer of the EU and the EU is the second-biggest customer of Canada. It's a very large trading bloc that we have access to, and there is some concern about that particular designation and how it's going to affect those members.

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The other concern that I would express is that Ontario is the only jurisdiction within the World Trade Organization that is taking this kind of stance with foreigntrained professionals. What about the Ontario-trained professionals who are operating all over the world? I would suggest, given the quality of Ontario accountants in all three designations—very high standards, very highly respected throughout the world—that a tremendous number of them are operating all over the world. Certainly, Ontario-trained chartered accountants are working for international companies. They get transferred all over the world. The same can be said for CGAs or CMAs. If other world trade organizations look to Ontario, look to Canada, and see this kind of restriction being placed on foreign-trained professionals, what's to stop them from putting that same kind of restriction on Ontario-trained professionals when they enter a foreign country? If that were to happen, of course, the consequences of that would rest squarely on the shoulders of this government. If I were this government, I would be somewhat concerned about that happening, particularly in any one of five major countries.

I also received a letter from the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada. They have a designation called CAFM. This bill, if not amended—it will probably not be amended at this point—will not allow aboriginal financial officers to use their designation of CAFM. I'll be interested to see how the associations handle the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada when they begin using that designation in the future in advertising or in other areas, which this bill expressly prohibits. It will be interesting to see how that rolls out.

The other area that I have concern about is this government's inconsistency. In the speech from the throne just two months ago, in March, the words "Open Ontario" were used 17 times. This bill brings in a very restrictive clause. Four times in the speech from the throne, the government said "the world needs Ontario," but if we shut out the world, I would suggest that we are likely to reap that which we have sown. Our world does need Ontario to succeed, and we will, just as we always have. "It begins with a new, five-year plan for a more open Ontario," is another quote from the throne speech.

I suppose "Open Ontario" in the throne speech is something that the government talked about then. That was then; this is now. It was just like the Premier saying that he wasn't going to raise our taxes. He even took an oath and signed a pledge to that effect, and he changed his mind. He said in the speech from the throne that opening Ontario was a major thrust of this government; it seems to have waned with the passage of Bill 158. Certainly Ontario is less open now than it was in March.

The designation that will show some restriction to how foreign-trained accountants can practise in Ontario I think makes the province a little bit weaker, and that's a shame. We have some of the best-trained accountants in

their fields. We have nothing to take a back seat to anywhere in the world as long as those designations are clearly marked out and no one is coming up with invented names, which is something that I think the government should focus on, as opposed to foreign-trained professionals, who are known throughout the world for their accountancy and their professionalism in that area.

I'm concerned about that. I'm concerned about whether there won't be any consequences to the passing of this bill, now or in the future. The British consul general—in my term here, over the last 15 years, I don't ever remember a foreign consul general getting involved in a piece of legislation going through the House. Even the Americans, who are far more intrusive in that nature in Canada, I can never remember getting involved in a piece of legislation going through the House. I think the government should have given that a little more thought than they did. So I make the government aware that we are very concerned about that. Hopefully, the consequences in the future will not weaken Ontario because of it.

That said, I look forward to the words of our esteemed member from Welland. I'm sure he will enlighten us on some more of the consequences of this bill. Other than that, I look forward to supporting this bill, personally, when it comes to a vote. We'll see what happens to it when it hits royal assent.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm pleased to rise and add a few comments in the time allotted to me on the Accounting Professions Act. I actually have the notes I had written for myself the last time I had this opportunity.

We're trying to modernize an act that would govern three different bodies. I think the minister this afternoon said it: The governance of one of those bodies is some 25 years old, so clearly it's time to look at some of those points and refresh and renew them. So we're just updating here.

The minister also said that there was no change. I think that was possibly in regard to what the former speaker was talking about. He assured us that there were items that we should not be worried about in this particular act.

There was consultation with the chartered accountants, certified general accountants and certified management accountants, and they were very supportive throughout the flow of this bill to this state, where we're at third reading. I made note here some time ago that I suspected that this bill would go to committee, like all our bills seem to do. Of course, that did happen, and people could once again make points that they thought were salient to the bill.

At the time I spoke last, we were talking about these items, and I mentioned that we were coming close to when people had to file tax. Not too long after that date, we're here at third reading, so I think this bill has moved reasonably swiftly in terms of the legislative agenda. I think it will bring transparency and clarity to the public, and certainly to the three bodies that it governs.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Ouestions and comments?

The member for Halton, you have up to two minutes to respond, if you so choose.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I see that Christina Blizzard in the Toronto Sun on May 11 wrote an article on this and talked about the British consul general, Mr. Jonathan Dart, and used his comments liberally in her article. I would recommend it to you. She suggests that "this legislation is parochial at best and protectionist at worst." That word "protectionist" is a very serious word when dealing with international trade agreements, as we in Canada know. We have to remember that "this province isn't an island unto itself. The world is a global marketplace," and we have to move in that direction.

I don't see the intent of this bill as being protectionist. I see the intent of this bill as trying to protect the consumer from confusion. I understand that. The problem is, I think, that in accomplishing that, we are moving into an area that might be seen to be protectionist, and that scares me when you're dealing with the international community and what the international community can do back to you. Canada, as we recognize, is a trading nation; fully 30% of our gross domestic product is exported goods and services. In comparison, in the United States, about 2% of their gross domestic product is exported. They're a consuming nation. We depend on the world for our standard of living, and that's a very delicate balance that we have to maintain. I'm concerned that, regardless of the intent of this bill, it can be seen as protectionist.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Kormos: I can tell folks that it's my expectation that this bill is going to go to a vote this afternoon, and while far be it from me to predict how individual members using their conscience, their sense of responsibility to their riding and to the province will vote, I have a strong suspicion that the bill is going to pass. I found this a most interesting exercise, and once again I want to thank the parliamentary assistant, who was a gentleman throughout the process—and who became somewhat adversarial at certain points in the process. But as usual, I wouldn't expect anything less from him. He was a gentleman, and he was generous to all of us on the committee.

Now, you already heard some reference to the Christina Blizzard column. I happened to bring that along, too. But I also noticed in the Toronto Star—because I'm going to open with this. I'm going to come back to it; we're going to get there. You've got to know what your destination is before you head out on your journey or else you don't know where you're going, which quite frankly was part of the problem, in my view, with this bill because as it progressed, as we saw draft 1 of various amendments, draft 2, draft 3 being emailed to Lord knows who, we saw a legislative drafting style that was more akin to spewing than it was to craftsmanship or craftspersonship. So the Blizzard column was interesting, as Ms. Blizzard's column tends to be.

But the Toronto Star's May 12 editorial, quoting Michaëlle Jean, our Governor General—who, as a result of Michael Ignatieff's inappropriate intervention, will probably never again be considered, even for a moment, for reappointment as Governor General. He effectively outed her as a Liberal. It's a shame that he would damage her career in such a way, but that's something for Michael Ignatieff to live with, not for us to live with. I'm something of a fan of—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Mr. Chudleigh is bang on. I'm a fan of Michaëlle Jean. The title of this editorial is "Why Diversity Matters." Michaëlle Jean is quoted as saying, "Saying yes to diversity is saying yes to modernity, to opportunity, and to the very future of our country.... But saying no carries a huge price. For each time social exclusion closes a door, another door is opened to desolation, frustration, and despair."

It's interesting that those comments would be reported as we debate third reading. I already made reference, in my brief two-minute response to the parliamentary assistant, that the bill was severed by some of the submitters to the committee as a 95%-5% issue. Look, they're right; 95% of the bill is inoffensive, it's benign; as a matter of fact it's, for my taste, a little too benign. But let's make one thing perfectly, perfectly clear: This bill does not regulate accountants nor does it protect the public. Any charlatan, any gangster, Conrad Black-if he were to be allowed back into the country, and as a noncitizen and now a felon one hopes that he would never be allowed back into Canada-any of these crooks and gangsters can open up shop and call themselves accountants. Not wanting to confuse the public—give me a break. The fact that this government had the opportunity in this exercise to truly protect the public and to avoid confusion yet didn't even venture one millimetre on to the turf of regulating the profession surely was more than just a tragic oversight. Any charlatan can call themselves an accountant. This bill is designed to protect the public? I don't think so. This bill is designed to avoid confusion? I don't think so, either.

All of us have received letters; I suppose those on the committee, a few more than others. I got a letter from Nancy Miotto at R. K. Shaver Chartered Accountant, 1 Church Street, St. Catharines. She, of course, writes very respectfully to me; I suspect this is identical to the letters that other chartered accountants have written to other MPPs in other parts of the province, but those things happen; I understand. Sometimes, because of the culture of a particular profession, people just happen to think the same way, even to the point of sharing some of the same terminology, some of the same lexicon. But it's a perfectly legitimate letter.

She exhorts me to support the passage of Bill 158, and I understand; she's a chartered accountant, and the chartered accountants, along with the CGAs and the CMAs are getting statutory teeth—their bodies are gaining statutory teeth so that they can investigate, so that they can prosecute, so that they can control people

within their respective body—not accountants across the board, just within their respective body.

So there's Ms. Miotto, and I appreciate receiving the correspondence from her. However, as in all these things, she writes, "In my view this is a reasonable restriction"—of course, she's referring to restriction on non-Ontario/Canadian accountants who have initials after their name—"to ensure that consumers and the public can tell the difference between an Ontario-based designation that is subject to Ontario laws, whose members understand Ontario tax and business law and who are

regulated by professional bodies in Ontario...."

First of all, none of these accountants in either of these three groups are subject, per se, to Ontario laws. There's nothing in this legislation that creates standards for accountants. In fact, all of the three appendices give the respective accounting body the power to set the standards. So it's not quite on target. I'm not criticizing Ms. Miotto, because she's an accountant, not a lawyer, and I just suggest that it was not correct. My fear is that the government may have wanted to create this impression. My fear is that the government might have reinforced this inaccurate perception of the legislation. It's just a fear. I'm not about to point the finger at anybody today. It's just a fear.

So I've received these letters, and I understand the interest, especially when it comes to 95% of the legislation which is about giving these three bodies the statutory authority to investigate, fine etc. But you see, I've also gotten letters like you have and you have and you have from other folks too. Like the letter I got from S. Asokan in Mississauga, who tells us that the initials after his name are ACMA, obtained in the United Kingdom, in Britain, and that the legislation—he doesn't use this language, but it became current during the course of the hearings that the big three were referred to as "the oligopoly." I like that because it sounds sort of heinous and quasi-Stalinist. So the oligopolists, the members of the oligopoly, attended at the committee, and I had occasion to say, "Aha, Mr. Zimmer, there's the oligopoly." So you see, you've got these two communities: You have a community of members of the big three—the CAs, CGAs and CMAs—and then you have any number of people who are Canadian-trained as well as foreign-trained. 1710

One of the most interesting exchanges—and I know the parliamentary assistant remembers it—was the contribution made by the Society of Professional Accountants of Ontario. They prepared a well-documented brief. As a matter of fact, as a result of their brief, I asked the research librarian, Susanne Hynes, to prepare a paper on the Society of Professional Accountants of Ontario, and she confirmed everything that they had to say in their submission, which includes letters to the parliamentary assistant and from the parliamentary assistant.

Now, I don't know—I read the letter from the parliamentary assistant at the time, and I watched the parliamentary assistant's body language while it was being referred to by the party making the submission, and I'm pretty sure that parliamentary assistants don't warrant a

signature machine like the Premier has and like ministers have—because they don't really sign their own correspondence. Lesser ones may sign it, but greater ones don't sign their own correspondence. The Premier's scroll that has David Peterson or Dalton McGuinty written on it isn't signed by Dalton McGuinty. It's a signature machine. Mr. McGuinty doesn't sit there late into the night with his magic marker signing these things. So I'm sure that the parliamentary assistant signed it.

I'm also pretty sure that he didn't sit down at his word processor, at his computer, at his—I'm not sure if he's a Mac guy or a PC guy. In his heart, he's probably a Mac guy, because he's a relatively creative and bright person, but Oueen's Park is pretty PC and IBMish. So the parliamentary assistant didn't sit down at his computer and draft this letter, I'm pretty sure of that—one, because the letter probably would have been more supportive of the Society of Professional Accountants of Ontario; and two, because it probably wouldn't have been over two pages long single-spaced. If he had drafted his own letter, it wouldn't have been as—dare I say it—weaselly as the letter in fact is, because bureaucrats write these letters, staff write these letters. It was a politically correct letter, and it was basically telling these people to buzz offwhich wouldn't have been politically correct, but which would have been far more candid and honest.

What we learned in committee is that it's not just foreign-trained accountants who are being excluded from—we're going to get to that. The argument—people could hear me rolling my eyes in committee, because it turned into a pretty—the observation, if you were a fly on the wall watching, one would have regarded it as pretty silly, because it was about the alphabet and alphabet envy. Then, as one of the presenters concurred with me in their report—we hadn't talked before—we referred to it as alphabet soup. But what we learned is that there are homegrown, Ontario-based bodies, like the Society of Professional Accountants of Ontario, who have been pleading for the right to establish their own regime similar to CAs, CGAs and CMAs, who have been politically denied that prerogative.

I remember—oh, I remember it so well—we were sitting just about here, because not much has changed for this caucus since the Tory days. Howard Hampton was the leader; he was to my left. There aren't very many people to my left, but he was to my left at the time. Howard Hampton was to my left, and the government had its public accounting bill, which would give CGAs

access to the world of public accounting.

CGAs have been denied that access for a long, long time. Chris Stockwell—you'll recall him. The junket to Europe did him in, the Paris trip with his family paid for by somebody other than him. He was over there in that corner near you, Speaker-

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: His riding association paid for it. Mr. Peter Kormos: Mr. Chudleigh says that his riding associating paid for it. That's a nice cover. But there he was, and Hampton said, "I'm going to stand up," because the accountants were here that day and the government was mostly gone.

What was really happening is that the government had every intention of milking the CGAs for one more election at least, in terms of political donations, because successive governments had teased the CGAs about entering into the-

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, that's assigning motive.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Yes, I am. You bet your boots I

Mr. Glen R. Murray: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Under section 23, members are not supposed to assign motives to government or other members.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I'll

remind the member of that on your behalf.

Mr. Peter Kormos: You bet your boots I was.

So here we have a political party that had every intention of drawing this out for at least one more election campaign, maybe two. And quite frankly, the opposition Liberals weren't indifferent to the potential of this being drawn out. But Hampton stood up and called for second and third reading simultaneously. The government didn't know whether to spit or go blind, and sure enough, they agreed; and sure enough, everybody's jaws dropped when they realized what they had done. The CGAs were as happy as could be, and the CAs got over their discomfort and everything has worked out fine. They had a professor sort of setting up a program whereby there was some agreement or some efforts at some agreement, and so on. So the CGAs are in now. They're not on the outside; they're inside.

But as I say, we learned that there are others who are still very much on the outside and who are Ontariogrown, and that's why, again, the reference by one accountant who wrote one letter—there were others—to "an Ontario-based designation that is subject to Ontario laws, whose members understand Ontario tax and business law...." You see, it's not quite the whole story, because we have bodies like the SPAO that are Ontarian, homegrown and Canadian-based that aren't admitted into this world of self-regulation either. I'm thankful to

Susanne Hynes for her help in that.

Then the other reference was made to the fact that those particular provisions in the area of section 26 and the various appendices—"this is in fact a carry-over provision from the current CA Act, which has been the law in this province since the days of Louis St. Laurent." Again, this is the provision that offended a whole lot of folks. The problem is that in the days of Louis St. Laurent, we didn't have a whole lot of people coming here from Sri Lanka or Ceylon, as it was then; we didn't have a lot of people coming here from India; we didn't have a lot of people coming here from the Middle East; we didn't have a lot of people coming here from Shanghai or Singapore or Hong Kong. The people who were coming here in the days of Louis St. Laurent tended to be European immigrants. That's the reality of it; I remember.

The world has changed dramatically. As a matter of fact, the majority of new Canadians come from places other than Europe. They come from places that, in the

days of Louis St. Laurent, were considered very exotic and very foreign. Those were also the days when folks didn't travel the way folks travel now, in the days before Anthony Bourdain and the travel-eating shows on cable television.

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The reality is that a whole lot has changed, and that's why Michaelle Jean wisely said that saying yes to diversity is saying yes to modernity, because what we learned is that members of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants-I suspect that that's the largest single group; I don't know for a certainty because we didn't have all that information—was established in 1919; a royal chartered body—this is a royal chartered body—a membership of 172,000 members and students in 165 countries. These are people who would dearly love to put their designation, awarded them from the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, after their names—to wit, ACMA or FCMA. They believe, and I suspect the CAs, CGAs and CMAs believe too, that this legislation will prevent them from doing that. Whether or not it will is a totally different story. I've described this legislation in committee as being very much a dog's breakfast, the way it was put together, cobbled together at the end, having all sorts of stuff in it that many a lawyer and, indeed, a judge will probably have a great deal of fun with down the road.

We also had a pretty remarkable attendance. I've never seen a member from the foreign diplomatic corps expressing an interest in legislation we were passing. We had the British consul general come, and I think the parliamentary assistant was as interested as I was in the fact that was a relatively novel scenario: a foreign government sending their ambassadorial representative, the consul general, to a legislative committee here at Queen's Park to speak to legislation that Queen's Park was contemplating. It was unusual, wasn't it, parliamentary assistant? Of course it was. You can nod more enthusiastically than that; it's okay.

The British consul general, using diplomatic language, made note of the fact that in the UK there are no—I'm quoting from him now, because he accompanied his attendance with a letter dated March 19, 2010, to the minister:

"In the UK there are no restrictions on the freedom of chartered accountants from Ontario (or any other part of Canada) to advertise their qualifications and we have no intention of introducing any at the present time." That, I suppose, is diplomatic-speak: "at the present time." If he didn't mean "at the present time and maybe down the road," he wouldn't have said that. Then he goes on:

"One of the most important chapters of the current negotiations on the Canada-EU economic and trade agreement (CETA) concerns the liberalisation of trade and services, a chapter which may include substantive provisions on the mutual recognition of qualifications. Ontario is playing an important role in these negotiations and we are hopeful of progress towards a substantial liberalisation of EU-Canada trade. I am concerned that Bill 158, as drafted, could limit the extent to which

Ontario is able to agree to liberalisation in the chartered accountancy area. I would therefore urge you to ensure that Bill 158, however it is ultimately drafted, gives you as Attorney General the power to designate certain organisations and their associated chartered accountancy designations as acceptable under Ontario law. Under such a provision, you would then be in a position to designate organisations such as the ACCA, CIMA and other organizations (with permitted designations, for example, of 'ACCA [UK],' 'CIMA [UK],' 'ICAEW [England and Wales],' 'ICAS [Scotland]' and 'ICAI [Ireland]')."

Pretty impressive that the British consul general—one notes that in England an accountant is an accountant, and if you have qualifications that aren't obtained, I presume, fraudulently, or you aren't misrepresenting yourself, you're entitled to put those qualifications after your name. In fact, research officer James Charlton, at my request, prepared a research paper, because I asked him to give us the data on England. He reported back, "Furthermore, there do not appear to be any legislative restrictions on accountants using their foreign designations when practising accountancy in the United Kingdom."

So what's the story here? What's going on? Indeed, that minority group, the anti-oligopolists, as they would describe themselves, that minority group of foreign-trained accountants, said, "Look. Let us put 'FCMA (UK)' after our name. That way it will be clear to one and all that that's a post-nomial," I believe we were told, although I haven't been able to find "post-nomial" in the dictionary, so "post-nomial," Mr. Zimmer, could have been a neologism that was thrust upon us—so that "post-nomial" is identified as an Ontario one. That seems like an eminently reasonable proposal, and I suppose it was too reasonable for the government to have adopted.

Himanshu Shah—this is not just CIMA—writes, as a qualified chartered accountant from India, that he is concerned and regrets that he won't be able to identify himself with the letter designations ACA or FCA, as a fellow, even if he puts in brackets "India" after them.

References were made to other professions. Let's talk about lawyers for a minute—why not? Lawyers, first of all, are regulated; granted, it's not by the government, but nobody is allowed to practise law here in the province of Ontario and hold himself out to be a lawyer who isn't licensed by the law society. That's clear.

I took a look at the Law Society Act—of course I did, Mr. Zimmer. And in the prohibitions and various offences, why, it seems to me that it would be perfectly legal for anybody in the province of Ontario to put after his name, on his or her business card, "member of the bar of Alberta," or the Law Society of Alberta—I don't know whether Alberta has a law society or not; they probably do—or "member of the Law Society of Great Britain," or UK; "member of the Law Society of"—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you kindly, Mr. Berardinetti; I hadn't thought of that—"member of the

Law Society of India," Sri Lanka, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia.

And indeed, Mr. Berardinetti points out the very postnominal OC, which isn't awarded anymore in Canada or Ontario but is awarded in all Commonwealth countries. as I understand it. I don't know how many still do it, but nobody is prohibited from putting QC after their name, even if their QC—because QCs are really, in most cases, not all but most cases, about political patronage. You give them to your political friends. They don't really designate—there have been some very good QCs and there have been some QCs who were mediocre but who had deep pockets. Mr. Sterling is a capable OC; he earned his. But there are more than a few OCs who simply have fat wallets and who have been generous to their political party, the party that happens to be in power, that used to award, I think in January, New Year's Day, Queen's counsels awards. But there's no prohibition against a QC from India putting "QC" after his or her name here in Ontario. You can't call yourself a lawyer. That's the significant factor. You can't call yourself a lawyer, you can't say you're in the practice of law, you can't offer legal services—but anybody can call themselves an accountant. Anybody can practise accountancy and anybody can advertise themselves as providing accountant services.

Confusion? What could be more confusing than that? I suppose I challenge the committee to illustrate—just go out there in the street now and ask any number of people. I don't care how big a polling group you want. Ask the same number—the pharmacists did polls in those 20 ridings and identified seats that, according to the polling as of last week, would fall to the Liberals, or seats that would fall to the Tories—there were more seats that would fall to the Tories—and seats that would fall to the NDP because of the decline of Tory poll support.

Ask any one of these people what the difference is between a CA and a CMA and a CGA. "I don't know" would be the response, one after the other. Heck, you've got real estate brokers and salespeople and insurance brokers who have the whole alphabet after their name—any number of designations awarded by their professions. I don't begrudge them that, but nobody is prohibiting them from doing that.

I think the law could be very clear and simple. If somebody practising accountancy misrepresents himself or herself, I agree that should be an offence. If somebody puts CGA after their name when they're not a member of CGA and authorized to practise by CGA and supervised by CGA, that should be an offence, or if somebody puts CMA or CA after their name; similarly, if somebody puts FCA (India) after their name who isn't an FCA from India, that should be an offence if they're practising accountancy.

1730

You and I both, Speaker, we get those single-spaced letters with no borders, the ones that are typewritten on both sides, and they're usually four or five pages long, and they're marked "confidential" and "for MPPs' eyes only." We get through around a page and a half of one on

a good day. But sometimes the authors of those letters tend to put a whole lot of alphabet after their name. I have no idea what it means. I'm not sure the authors of those peculiar and particular letters know what it means.

The whacky amendment was the one that said. "Nothing in this section"—we're talking about section 26—"affects ... the right of a person to use any term, title, initials, designation or description"—we're talking about FCAs, for instance, or members of CIMA—"identifying himself or herself as an accountant, if the person does not reside, have an office or offer or provide accounting services in Ontario." Well, no kidding. For Pete's sake, of course not; they don't reside in Ontario, they don't have an office in Ontario. In case their car has one of those magnetic sticky things on the side and they're driving through, they're going to Niagara Falls on their way to do some cross-border shopping in Buffalo; they won't be affected. I don't know. They don't reside in, they don't practise in the province of Ontario. What a stupid—that was silly; I'll leave it at silly—amendment.

So we're terribly concerned. We are terribly concerned about the exclusionary nature of this bill as it stands but don't begrudge the CAs, the CMAs, the CGAs anything in terms of the capacity to regulate themselves. Furthermore, I suspect the whole thing is pretty academic, because I suspect that, as was commented on by more than a few presenters, some of this stuff, these restrictions about identifying designations that you've acquired honestly, will fall by the wayside once the courts get hold of them. As I say, there will be plenty for courts and lawyers to present to the courts in that regard.

But here we are; Christina Blizzard: "Dalton McGuinty's government has been repeating, ad nauseam"— I'm Catholic, so I know a little bit of Latin; I know what "ad nauseam" means, and so does everybody else; it means you want to vomit—"its mantra about 'Open Ontario'....

"The province will tell you that we welcome overseas business and encourage immigration. We especially encourage newcomers with professional qualifications ... why is the government slamming the door on foreign-trained accountants?"

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Read the legislation, not the columnist.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The new member for somewhere said—who has made no contribution to this debate on third reading; who will at the very best enable himself to do a meagre two minutes; who risks putting the legislation over 6 o'clock so that it carries on for yet another day, should he do that two minutes; and who wants to, from the mere sidelines say it's not, and then suggests that I haven't read the legislation. Please, Speaker. What poppycock. What silliness. What garbage. What rubbish. Did I say "nonsense" yet? What a feeble—oh, yeah, that got me right in the solar plexus. I'm gasping for air. I can barely stand up anymore. What a body blow that was. Please, Speaker.

We had, until that interjection, a reasonably reasonable and, might I say, intelligent debate about this. The Attorney General, Mr. Zimmer, the Conservative critic

and then the member for—we had an intelligent and reasonable debate until the member for Toronto Centre interjected, whose interjection I, of course, put on the record by responding to it because I am confident that people will read it. Look, I say to him, "You're the heckler; you're supposed to be making me look stupid."

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Well, you did that all on your

Mr. Peter Kormos: So there you go. You've got this sort of paucity of meaningful contribution when we've got a community of thousands out there who are very worried about what this is going to mean for them and their ability to identify themselves with legitimately won professional designations. I know that the CGAs, CMAs and CAs feel very proprietary, so proprietary that they say to these new Canadians, these foreign-trained professionals, "Well, you can come join us." I don't know; that seems to me to be very elitist and ethnocentric, as I said in committee, perhaps even xenophobic. That's some of the talk you hear. You see it in some of the blogs that follow some of the right-wing columnists: "Well, if these foreigners come to Canada, they should do things the way we do them, and they shouldn't try to impose their culture on Canada." Well, their culture is Canada.

I'm so very impressed with the United Kingdom that accepts accountants internationally. It is a world financial centre. As a matter of fact, the Premier seems to think that Ontario should be the Canadian financial centre and makes a bid, not inappropriately, for the location of the national regulator here in the city of Toronto. Toronto especially is so diverse. What would be wrong at all with a member of a community who perhaps identified more with and understood the Indian accounting designation, with that person wanting to know that that accountant he or she was choosing had that designation? It seems to be perfectly reasonable and not at all contrary to the interests of CAs, CGAs or CMAs.

The impression was left that Jane Public or Joe Public walk down the street and say to themselves, "Hmm, I need an accountant." They're just regular, plain folks, like the folks who live in my neighbourhood, good folks, hard-working folks, factory-working folks, school teachers, police officers. These people tend to hire H&R Block, which probably has very few CAs or CGAs doing personal income tax for folks like where I come from. These people might have a small business where they're as likely to hire a bookkeeping service which has nothing to do with the levels of accountancy that the CGA, the CA and the CMA represent—or CIMA, for that matter, or FCAs from India.

The big firms that tend to employ CAs, CGAs and CMAs, and even the not-so-big firms that have clients who require a CA, a CGA or a CMA, are going to be pretty sophisticated clientele. They're going to know the difference between a CMA and a CA, and they're going to seek one as compared to the other.

I don't know amongst whom the confusion is going to be created. I do know that there will be a huge community that will be denied the opportunity to identify a well-trained professional who happens to have been trained and acquired their designation in a former British colony, which is where CIMA had—you know, these 162 countries; the British colonies weren't 162 countries, but those are the basis of them.

So, we remain troubled with the 5%. We think the government's making a regrettable mistake by telling foreign-trained professionals—or rather, as I identified in committee, it's far more preferable to say non-Canadiantrained professionals—by denying them the ability to identify who they've been accredited by.

I suggested that, heck, nobody's going to uphold this legislation when it comes to the biggest sign in the world saying, literally, "My name is so-and-so, and I have this certification from an Indian accounting body called the ACA." There were some people vigorously shaking their heads in the audience and, quite frankly, it wasn't the ACA people or the CIMA people. It was the CA-CGA people. I can't for the life of me understand what the threat is of that.

As I say, David Zimmer—and he could be a member of the British Columbia law society or a member of the British Columbia bar. David Zimmer, who's a lawyer, and I'm told a pretty good one, would be perfectly entitled—even if he weren't a lawyer in Ontario, and that's what we're talking about—to identify himself as a member of the bar of British Columbia or of Saskatchewan or of Manitoba.

1740

The accountants will pass. The CAs, CGAs and CMAs will carry on. The public will be unprotected from charlatans who practise accounting, because anybody under the sun can call themselves an accountant. Heck, I only got as far as grade 11 in high school, but you could have grade 11 math and call yourself an accountant. I can't even recall what grade 11 math was about, but the fact is that somebody could have grade 11 math or grade 8 math, or no math skills whatsoever. Math isn't the only element to accounting, but it's the one that people identify with most; fine-tipped pens and ledgers—it's far more than that, because it's all about interpreting that stuff as well. But you can practise accounting. You can call yourself an accountant and you can have a huge billboard that says Joe Schmo, accountant. It can be flashing in neon. There can be radio and television commercials saying, "Visit Joe Schmo the accountant, the best accounting firm in town: skilled, qualified, professional, lowest rates, best performance, acknowledged internationally." That person can do that and do it legitimately, and there seems to be no interest on the part of the government in protecting the public from that person.

Maybe this bill would have been better presented by the minister of consumer protection. Maybe she would have been more focused on consumer protection than this bill is, because she's an astute and conscientious member of the government, and she is unique. So maybe this bill should have come from the ministry of consumer protection. Maybe had it come from the ministry of consumer protection, there would truly be more consumer protection in that people wouldn't be allowed to call themselves accountants unless they had passed a certain threshold, a minimum threshold of scale and competence.

But alas, her plate is full, and it's not her bill, so the public doesn't get consumer protection, nor do those non-Canadian-trained professionals. You don't have to be foreign-born to be a non-Canadian-trained professional. You can be born in Canada. You can be Canadian by birth and still get your certification by going to school in the UK or India or Sri Lanka or Singapore—any number of places. Nor will those people be protected. They're going to be denied something that they have every right to do, and that is to identify themselves as having received a legitimate qualification, a legitimate honour.

This turned into this contest about the alphabet, because really, at the end of the day, it seems to me that that's what it's about. It's not about the full identification; it's about the alphabet, the postnominal, if indeed that's an accurate word. I rely upon the presenter at committee.

New Democrats remain pleased about 95% but are very concerned and very upset about the other 5%. That takes us, I suspect, to the end of this debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. David Zimmer: I wanted to, in my two minutes, correct the record, because I think it's an important error that needs correcting. The member for Halton, Mr. Chudleigh, read into the record a letter from Deloitte and Touche, the accounting firm. The letter that he read in part was to support the idea, and he left it quite clear, that Deloitte, in that letter—I believe it was dated sometime in March—did not endorse this new legislation.

I have here a letter that was addressed on April 30, 2010, to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, attention Susan Sourial, the clerk.

"Dear member:

"We are writing as a follow-up to our letter dated April 26, 2010"—I'm sorry, the letter the member for Halton referred to is from April 26.

Anyway, this new letter goes on to say: "We have now received the final draft legislation and have reviewed the exceptions whereby other internationally qualified accountants can use their designation.

"The proposed amendments alleviate most of our concerns regarding the rights of immigrants to Ontario to use their designation as we outlined in our letter of April 26. This important legislation also safeguards the consumer's interest, which is an important element of the new act

"Accordingly, we now support the amended legislation.

"Sincerely,

"Calvin H. Buss, CA,

"Canadian managing partner

"Client excellence." Deloitte Touche chartered accountants.

I thought that it was important to correct the record on such a sensitive matter.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

The member for Welland, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I appreciate the parliamentary assistant referencing yet another letter. I was aware of that because I got an email from Deloitte some time ago. But you see, it's not about who supports the legislation. I understand the CGAs support the legislation; they'd be nuts not to. I understand the CMAs support it; of course they do. I understand the CAs support it; they, too, would be nuts if they didn't. The question is about who doesn't support it and why. Nobody who is a dissenter suggested that these bodies—CA, CGA, CMA—shouldn't have the legislative provisions contained in the bill. We agree.

Does the bill protect the public from incompetent people, unscrupulous people and dishonest people who would call themselves accountants? No. It's a separate issue. The bill clearly isn't designed as a consumer protection bill, end of story.

But it's the foreign-trained, the non-Canadian-trained professionals, most of them new Canadians—not all of them—who, in the context of being told that Ontario has opened its doors, are being told that it's opened its doors, but you can't bring all of what you earned and acquired before you came into Canada with you; to wit, the designations you acquired in prestigious Indian-based, UK-based professional bodies.

There is just a regrettable tone to the denial of that privilege to these folks, a regrettable tone that seems to be counterproductive. Indeed, it may even handcuff the government in the course of its negotiations with the EU on so-called open trade, especially when it comes to professionals practising in both jurisdictions.

I'm glad Mr. Zimmer had the chance. I wish those foreign-trained professionals had the chance, too.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak? Does the Attorney General wish to respond?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: No, sir.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Bentley has moved third reading of Bill 158. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Mr. Peter Kormos: On division.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Carried on division.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Orders of the day?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

This House is adjourned until 9 of the clock Thursday morning, May 13.

The House adjourned at 1749.

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Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Emic (PC) Oxford Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Hardeman, Emic (PC) Laarak-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario Minister of Chizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Inmigration / Ministre des Affaires (viques et de l'Inmigration / Ministre des Affaires (viques et de l'Inmigration / Ministre des Affaires (viques et de l'Inmigration / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario Chatham-Kent-Essex Niagara West-Glanbrook / Niagara Ouest-Glanbrook / Darfer (Telen (LIB) Jaczek, Helena (LIB) Jaczek	Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Superior North /	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hardeman, Ernie (PC) Lanaxk-Frontenac-Lennox and Addignon Horwath, Andrea (NDP) Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB) St. Paul's Chatham-Kent-Essex Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hoy, Pat (LIB) Chatham-Kent-Basex Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC) Niagara West-Glanbrook / Niagara Cuest-Glanbrook Dak Ridges-Markham Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB) Johnson, Rick (LIB) Johnson, Johnson, Lind (LIB) Johns	Hampton, Howard (NDP)		
Hillier, Randy (PC) Addington Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, Revo Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti democratique de l'Ontario Minister of Chizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration Minister of Chizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration Minister of Chizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration Minister of Chizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires Leader, Official Opposition / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti Resources / Minister of Natural		Oxford	
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Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB) Johnson, Rick (LIB) Johnson,			
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Dines, Sylvia (PC) Dufferin—Caledon	**		Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
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Mississauga—Brampton-Sud Trinity—Spadina Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB) McMeekin, Ted (LIB) McMeelleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB) Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP) Hamilton-Est-Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est-Stoney Creek Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB) Huron—Bruce Minister of Agriculture, Ge of and Rural Affairs / Ministre de la Formation et des Affaires rurales Minister und Innovation et des Affaires rurales		-	
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Centre-Nord Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB) McMeekin, Ted (LIB) Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough- Westdale McNeely, Phil (LIB) McMeelileur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB) Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP) Miller, Paul (NDP) Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Minister Centre / Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister of Agriculture, Gel 'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales		_	2011 ATT 11 AT M. O. (2011) 11 C (1)
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB) Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario McMeekin, Ted (LIB) Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough- Westdale McNeely, Phil (LIB) Ottawa-Orléans Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB) Ottawa-Vanier Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP) Hamilton East-Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est-Stoney Creek Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales		Centre-Nord	
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Westdale McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB) Ottawa—Vanier Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones Miller, Norm (PC) Parry Sound—Muskoka Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB) Huron—Bruce Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB) Ottawa—Vanier Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones Miller, Norm (PC) Parry Sound—Muskoka Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Ninister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB) Huron—Bruce Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	_	
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Miller, Norm (PC) Parry Sound-Muskoka Miller, Paul (NDP) Hamilton East-Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est-Stoney Creek Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB) Huron-Bruce Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa-Vanier	sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée
Miller, Paul (NDP) Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB) Huron—Bruce Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	Miller Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	dat 11.mitos italicopiloles
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Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB) Huron-Bruce Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	-	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la
	Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron-Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de
	Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York-Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	
Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
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		gouvernment House Leader / Leader partementance aujoint du
Down Michael (MDD)	Beaches-East York	gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP) Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	•
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London-Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland-Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara Grag (LID)	Vaughan	Government Troube Design / Design partition of the control of the
Sorbara, Greg (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
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Second Session, 39th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 39^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Thursday 13 May 2010

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 13 mai 2010



Speaker Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk Deborah Deller Président L'honorable Steve Peters

Greffière Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 13 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 13 mai 2010

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the aboriginal prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SECURITIES INDUSTRY

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 25, 2010, on the amendment to the motion by Mr. Duncan to locate the new common securities regulator in Toronto.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: The last time we spoke about this was on March 25, 2010: an amendment introduced to the motion by our finance minister to make sure Toronto is the centre of the financial system in the country.

I listened to my colleague the member from Pickering—Scarborough East speaking about many different things. I remember that he said, "When I go outside the province of Ontario, people ask me, 'Where are you from?' and I say I'm from Toronto. 'Oh, yes, we know Toronto. Where exactly in Toronto?'" He would say, "From Pickering—Scarborough East," which is adjacent to the city of Toronto. It's the same thing when he goes outside the province of Ontario or outside the country. People ask him the same question, and he answers the same way, because everyone around the globe, especially in North America, recognizes the city of Toronto as the financial capital of the province of Ontario and for the whole country.

I'm a person from London, Ontario. Actually we're proud to say that our city of London invests a lot in the financial industry. We are home to many insurance companies, strong banks and financial institutions. But the main issue here, as the finance minister mentioned, is to create one security system for the whole country, because it's important for our financial institutions to be sound and in good condition.

Not long ago, I was speaking to my friend who owns Global Financial, which deals in education funds, mutual funds and other investments. In order to be a financial institution in Canada—to be a national company—you have to have an office in every province and territory. We have 13 provinces and territories in Canada, and you have to have an office in every one of them. Why? In order to get recognition as a national institution. The sad part is that every province and territory is a different jurisdiction with different regulations and a different sys-

tem, which makes it difficult for many financial institutions to have one system adopted across the nation. That's why our finance minister is calling for one regulator across Canada. I know that when our minister, the Honourable Gerry Phillips, got elected in 2003, he set the tone and introduced a way to create one mechanism for the whole nation and for Toronto to be the capital of that system.

Why Toronto as the capital? Because all the analysis by all the financial institutions recognizes its role in the financial system in the whole country and in all the provinces. We in Ontario employ almost 365,000 people in financial institutions across this beautiful province, and the majority of those people work in the city of Toronto. Since 2003, we have increased by almost 60,000 the number of people who work in financial institutions. If you want to add the people working in the legal departments, IT departments and many other sectors that support these financial institutions, you'd be talking about almost 700,000 people in the province of Ontario working in the financial system and in industries related to the financial system.

Therefore, I think it's our obligation and duty to strengthen that system and give it the ability to maintain, flourish, expand and make a secure system, not just for the province of Ontario but for the whole nation. We are well recognized not just in the province of Ontario, not just in Canada, but in North America. Toronto is recognized as the third-largest financial centre after Chicago and New York. Also, we have very strong banks—five of the strongest banks in North America—situated here in Toronto in the province of Ontario.

I know that folks in London—my people in London—would say, "Why not London?" I know that the member from Simcoe—Grey mentioned that London should be the capital, not Toronto; we should separate Toronto from the province and create another capital, London, Ontario. Passionately, I agree with him, but when I think about it, I think that our obligation and duty is to strengthen ourselves in the province of Ontario by creating unity between Toronto and the rural areas and between Toronto and other cities, because we are only strong when we are working together, from Toronto to London to Windsor to Sarnia to Ottawa, to small towns to big towns. All the communities will create a force—

Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Peterborough, too. Peterborough plays a pivotal role in our economy, and they have great representation here in the House. It's important when we work together.

0910

In order to create that mechanism, we have to create one regulator to manage and control that system because a company that wants to come to Ontario or to Canada to open gets stuck with so many different rules. As I mentioned a few minutes ago, my friend who owns Global Financial manages almost \$3.5 billion of investments from across the province of Ontario, from across the nation, and sometimes faces difficulties because the rules we have in the province of Ontario are different than the rules in Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec or other provinces. So I think it makes it difficult to have many different systems. Could you imagine if we had one regulator, one system, adopted across the nation? It would make it easier for those financial institutions to flourish, to grow and to increase their capacity and their potential, and would also welcome other investment to come from around the globe to invest in Ontario and Canada. I think it's a very important step.

That's why I think the Minister of Finance, all the ministers of finance and all the people who work in the financial sector in the province of Ontario endorse this move. Also, especially when we had the difficult financial situations happen in North America and worldwide, people panicked. The people who invested in the mutual funds lost more than their investment. The people who had some kind of investment with different companies with no security lost their investments. Many names float around the globe because there was no security in many different nations; that is why people invested money heavily, to invest and secure the seniority in their life, and they lost it.

Therefore, I think it's important for all of us to create that regulator body, one system that would be managed across the whole nation, and we recommend, as the people from Ontario, Toronto to be the capital because Toronto naturally hosts, at the present time, most of the financial institutions and the strongest financial institutions in the whole country and is also ranked the third, maybe the second, in North America after the financial crisis in the United States and many different places. The bankers and the financial institutions in this province and this nation show how much we are able to manage our investments, how much we have security in our investments, because we took the right approach. We made sure that all the people who invested in our financial institutions were secure because we have a mechanism in place. So the only crippling obstacle facing those financial institutions is the many regulators across the nation, which makes it difficult to attract more business, to attract more financial institutions to come to this nation.

I was reading some things about how many commission tribunal investigations happen in the province of Ontario: almost 48%, up from 23%. I think the number increased as a result of the dilemma of many different institutions that didn't manage their assets or their financial systems very well. It also creates some kind of chaotic situations among the people who invest in those institutions. It's our Ontario Securities Commission which

plays a pivotal role in this area to make sure all the banks, all the financial institutions, follow the rules and regulations and make sure all the people who invest in those companies have some kind of security in place.

As we know, many companies in Ontario invest heavily in education financially, called RESPs. Many families across the province—and across the nation, as a matter of fact—like to invest in the future of their kids when they are born. They want to put something aside, and in the province of Ontario we contribute—and the government of Canada contributes—for some of those monies to support families who want to save some money so their kids, when they reach the age of 18 or older, when they want to go to university, have money set aside for them to use and be able to continue their education. We don't want to lose this money. Also, so many people, especially us here in this House, when we have no pension, put some money in mutual funds and many different assets so, for goodness' sake, when we grow up and we're not coming back to this place and have no source of income, we can rely on those savings.

But when you find out you lost most of your investments, especially as a result of the crisis that happened almost 16, 17, 18 months ago, you get panicked. What are we supposed to do? How can we make or create a safe security mechanism in order for our money, for our investments, for us and the rest of the people of this province, for the rest of the people in this country, to be safe so they can rely on investments they put away for when they grow up, when they become old or are not able to find a job?

The fragmented regulatory structure puts this province and our country at a competitive disadvantage. I think it's important to recognize that concern of the financial sector, because we cannot keep going without any security. Recently, in a survey that was conducted, almost 92% of the financial institutions in the province of Ontario and in Canada agreed that there should be one securities system, one regulatory body, for all financial institutions and all provinces. Then every province could follow and there could be easy mobility from province to province.

I still remember a gentleman who bought a company in Alberta and wanted to move it to Toronto. He faced a lot of different terms. The securities commission of Alberta gives companies whatever they want and makes it easy for them to transfer, but the securities commission in Toronto creates different obstacles, not because they want to create obstacles but because the rules and regulations are different from what they have in Alberta or British Columbia.

It would be important to have one system, and companies and financial institutions could move from province to province without any problems. I guess it would create a comfort zone for many different institutions and companies to come to this province and to Canada and invest. All the financial institutions, all the financial companies, all the bank systems and all the people who are interested in this subject are in favour of creating one regulator in Canada in order to control, manage and

oversee the conduct of financial institutions in this nation.

Also, the Canadian government agrees with this motion. In our government, under the leadership of our Premier, Dalton McGuinty, and under the leadership of our Chair of Cabinet, Minister Phillips, we've been talking about this since we were elected in 2003, in order to create one regulatory body and to invite that regulatory body to have offices in Toronto. It's a natural choice because we are the engine of the financial institutions in the whole nation; we are the financial engine of the whole country. It would be important. If we strengthen that financial system, that centre will pay back the whole nation, not just the province of Ontario.

As a result of that, the Canadian Securities Transition Office has been established to conduct a study of how we can put all the securities commissions together and how we can create one regulatory body. Most importantly, 10 of the 13 territories and provinces agreed and wanted to send representatives to this body. The federal government has named two appointees to create that transition office. Most importantly, there are two appointees from Ontario. One of them, Bryan Davies, is a former provincial Deputy Minister of Finance. The other, Larry Ritchie, is at present a vice-chair of the Ontario Securities Commission.

Those appointments send a great indication about the talent and skills we have in the province of Ontario and also about the confidence in our province and in the people who work in our province to be elected and to lead the transition system in the nation to create one regulatory body.

I think it's important to continue to work in this direction. It's important to create that mechanism in order to create a financial system that is safe and sound for all

people.

I know that many people spoke before me on this issue and voiced their concern about fly-by-night organizations from many nations which come to many provinces, establish themselves, grow and appear financially sound and able to give the people who invest with them some kind of great return. Then what happens? They leave, and people lose their money. They try to play on the differences between the provinces by moving from place to place, using the weaknesses in the securities commissions in the provinces to play that game, to establish themselves and, in their mind, not to grow and establish themselves in a professional manner but to take the money of the people who invested with them.

I think our direction is the right approach. I think that if we create that regulatory body, it would be important for the province of Ontario, for Canada and for all the people who invest in many different institutions in this

nation.

I think many other provinces would agree with us to have Toronto be the capital, the head office for the regulator body, the one system, because we proved ourselves over the years. We proved ourselves and we sent indications to many different nations around the globe.

I was listening to the finance minister the other day when they had a summit about the banking system and how we can tax the banking system. He stood firm and strong and said, "No. We cannot reward our banking system by imposing on them and forcing them to pay more taxes. We should reward them because they help us as a nation to maintain our financial system, to maintain our infrastructure and to maintain the value of our dollar, which is important for all of us."

Therefore, when they met, they said no. I guess Canada and Japan said no, because it's important to reward that financial system, which gives us stability and the support we need in difficult times, and proves not just to Canadians but to the whole globe that our financial system is strong and sound.

Recently, I went to Saudi Arabia. I was in Lebanon, and I was approached by many different people. A guy from Saudi Arabia, who owns a bank—it's called the Al Rajhi Bank. You know what he said to me? He said that Canada is the best place to invest; he said that the best place to move his institution is Canada. That Al Rajhi Bank is one of the oldest banks in Saudi Arabia, and it's one of the strongest in the Middle East. They have, under their management, billions of dollars, and they want to come to Ontario. They want to see how they can come, because they heard about this province.

Also, not a long time ago, I was speaking to a gentleman from Lebanon who owns the bank Fransabank, and you know what he said? He is an economist; he was a Minister of Finance in Lebanon for many, many years. He also wants to come to Ontario, because he heard about our economic system. He heard about our financial system. He heard about our security system. But how can we put the whole system together to create some kind of engine or mechanism to comfort not just Canadians, but all people around the globe?

I think the only approach is our approach, which creates one regulated system, one regulator body, and can be adopted not just in Ontario but across the nation, from the territories to the provinces. Also, we'll open it here in Toronto, because Toronto, especially Bay Street, sends a signal to many different nations around the globe about how important our financial institutions are for our nation, for our currency, for our infrastructure, for our health care and for our growth in this nation. Therefore, it's our obligation and duty to continue to be an advocate on behalf of all the people who are investing their savings in our financial institutions for them to be secure, and also to invite all the people who want to enjoy what we have to come and invest without any fear.

It would be important if we created that one regulator body. Also, it would be more important if that regulator body opens its office and is headquartered in the city of Toronto because Toronto, I believe, is the capital of this beautiful province, financially, and also the engine of the whole nation, financially. So it would be a great signal and great respect for the city that protected our economy and protected our financial institutions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to rise this morning and speak to the motion. I will read it once again. The motion is "that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario endorses the need for a strong national securities regulator and endorses the Open Ontario plan to grow our financial services industry by calling on the federal government to recognize Toronto's role as the third-largest financial centre in North America and therefore locate the new common securities regulator in Toronto where it belongs."

That's what the motion calls for. There's a part of the motion that we can't agree with, of course, but overall, I wanted to point out that, yes, we would agree with a national securities regulator being located in the city of Toronto.

Right off the bat, we all recognize that Toronto is recognized as Canada's national financial services centre. We know that it is the headquarters of the five largest banks in our country and a number of branches of foreign banks, and over 1,700 financial services firms are located in the city as well. It's also the home of the Toronto Stock Exchange, one of the primary stock exchanges we have in North America. According to our data, the sector employs somewhere around 140,000 people. Employment by the financial services sector has consistently been around 9% to 12% of total employment in the province.

I think you can also say that part of the argument for this, of course, would be the fact that Toronto is fairly central in our country, as opposed to the far east or Vancouver, or wherever it may be. It's safe to say that with our transportation system, airports et cetera, it's fairly convenient for transportation around North America. All the large banks we have with their headquarters in the city of Toronto are actually actively pursuing business on international markets, both in America and throughout the world, and I think it's important that we remember that.

So I don't think it's any kind of genius thought to think of this motion as though it was a Liberal plan. The reality is that Toronto is already the national leader in financial services, and if we do come up with a national financial services regulator, I think we could assume that the federal government would very seriously consider the city of Toronto. The only place I can see that might be competition to that may be Montreal.

By the way, it's nice to see that we have a Canadian team in the Stanley Cup semifinals, and I hope the Canadiens go all the way to the Stanley Cup. I'm a Montreal fan, myself. My dad was an adamant Leaf fan, and of course he kind of made us argue back and forth to make the games more interesting in our household. So I became a Montreal fan many years ago, and I'm really happy to see the determination and excitement we see with that in Canada right now.

We, in our caucus, have a problem with one part of the resolution, and we want it removed and would like it removed; I know we're debating that part right now. I'll read the section: "... and endorses the Open Ontario plan

to grow our financial services industry." I'm disappointed that that would even be part of this resolution, because it's basically making it a kind of biased or partisan type of motion, in that this is part of what the Liberal Party has called the Open Ontario plan in their throne speech. Of course we on this side of the House, at least in our caucus, we do not agree with the throne speech for many, many reasons—we don't believe the province is going in the right direction—and I'm going to outline a number of those in the next couple of minutes.

I think it's safe to say that one of the key arguments we've had in the House over the last few weeks, dating back to the introduction of the harmonized sales tax, is that this caucus simply cannot agree with it, particularly at this time. There are a number of reasons why we don't agree with it. One is that in many provinces that have—I think four provinces have introduced the harmonized sales tax—it was a revenue-neutral tax. That means they dropped the provincial sales tax and didn't give everybody back a wad of money prior to the election—this sort of shenanigans. They actually used the provincial sales tax, dropped it, and all taxes were included on all items.

However, with the tax we have today, we all know that the government accepted around \$4 billion from the federal government, and we know it will accumulate at least another \$3 billion to \$4 billion on top of that, even in the first year. We don't think that's good planning in very difficult economic times. If any kind of tax was coming in, we would rather have seen that it definitely would be revenue-neutral, and we know this tax is not. It's going to be a fairly substantial tax, particularly on people who are low-income earners and seniors. Those are the people I fear most about in my riding.

I can tell you that we have a high percentage of people in the riding of Simcoe North who are over the age of 70. They don't have any other sources of revenue, and when they get hit with a tax that might cost them another \$800, \$900, \$1,200, \$1,500 a year, whatever it may be—when those sorts of things happen, we know we've got some problems and we have to be very concerned about that.

The other thing is, the government, in its Open Ontario throne speech and in its budget, continues to talk about the creation of 591,000 jobs. We've heard all kinds of numbers tossed around the House, and we're still trying to get the math clear on exactly what the government refers to. We just don't see how the Green Energy Act can create 591,000 jobs. If some of the manufacturers were to relocate in Ontario and produce all of the solar panels here, all of the wind-generating turbines here, we can see how there may be a few thousand jobs. But 591,000 jobs is what the government is basing the throne speech on.

This budget shows a long-term plan forecasting up to the year 2017-18. They say at that point they will have the budget balanced using the harmonized sales tax and these 591,000 jobs. However, the 591,000 jobs right now is pie in the sky. They're assuming that these jobs will come. But if they don't come, the deficit will not be elim-

inated in the year 2017-18, and it may be 10 or 15 years after that before it's done. Who knows for sure?

We know this government has never really stuck close to a throne speech. A clear indication of that has been the way they've mismanaged the energy file. When the new government came in in 2003, they had a plan in their platform to eliminate coal-fired generators by 2007. Well, that was three years ago, and the only coal-fired generating plant that has ever been eliminated in the province of Ontario is the one that was set in plan by my colleague the member from Waterloo, Elizabeth Witmer, when she was the Minister of Energy. That plan did go through, and the government took the credit for it, of course, but I was with her the day she made that announcement at Lakeview generating plant. That's the only plant where we've actually seen it happen. So we're not able to have a lot of confidence in the government when it comes to forecasting exact dates.

So when someone tells me they're three years behind in closing down coal-fired generators—and now we know it won't be until 2015, 2016 or 2017 for those—how can we say that the debt that has been accumulated, the \$21 billion this year—and they say they'll eventually lower it to zero by 2017-18. How can we possibly say they have any kind of a clear forecast on that? I don't believe that number, and I certainly don't believe the 591,000 net new jobs that the government talks about.

I hope I'm wrong. I hope there are 590,000 jobs created in Ontario, and I hope that a lot of the young people who are looking for teaching or nursing positions now or the people who have graduated out of community colleges are finding jobs in Ontario and not having to move to Saskatchewan or Alberta or south of the border to find employment.

When we talk about keeping that section out of the motion—that's why our party, and I think myself in particular—I could never support a motion that has the Open Ontario plan as part of it. I know the government members believe that they should go along with the Premier's office and support this kind of a resolution, but we don't feel that way on this side of the House.

I wanted to talk a bit more on the energy file. When the announcements came a few weeks ago here about the 184 projects the government is planning to sign agreements on with the private sector companies to create new energy programs in the province of Ontario, we've already come up with some problems in my riding, and it's not to do with the wind turbines. We don't have any wind turbine projects in Simcoe North at this time. It doesn't really fit into the wind atlas, although we do have a lot of it on Georgian Bay.

However, what has really disturbed a lot of the residents are some of the locations of the new solar farms. Most of them are about 100 acres in size. We've got two of them in what we call the old township of Matchedash. Two of them in particular are on good farmland. Even this year, the farmland is under cultivation. The province of Ontario has supplied funding in the past to help put tile drainage on these farms. They've grown good crops over

the years. But suddenly, out of nowhere, somebody who has a bunch of Tim Hortons doughnut projects in Toronto has bought one of the farms. He has somehow found a fancy way to lease it to some company from California; it's a California energy company. Without any indication to the neighbours and without their knowledge, suddenly this plan is being approved on what we would call good farmland. Whether it would qualify under this Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs program as class 1, 2, 3 or 4, I don't know. However, it is farmland and it is growing good crops and, as I said earlier, it has been tile-drained accordingly. So it's difficult for us to support a plan like that.

I guess this argument goes on and on about the change in the government's plan and how involved the municipal governments are. The government likes to say they are so transparent and they like to say they work closely with their municipal neighbours. However, on this same piece of farmland that got approval for 100 acres of solar, if that same owner was to go to the municipality and say he'd like to put a welding shop on that property, he would need a very strict official plan amendment and a zoning bylaw to actually carry on with that. The neighbours would have full control. They would be able to voice their concerns at public meetings and follow the public process that we follow through all of our zoning and official plan amendments.

So I really think the plan to move ahead without the transparency and without the approval of the municipal governments has been a step backwards in terms of the transparency and the planning process that we've built up over the years in the province of Ontario. Yes, the planning process we have today in Ontario probably includes a lot of red tape, but it does give property rights to people who have bought property in good faith. They have an ability to move ahead and to actually voice concerns on issues around the planning matters in their municipalities. That's why people elect their municipal councils: to have an opportunity to go to their council members and voice their concerns on planning issues.

If we've gone in this direction, particularly with energy, then I'm very curious about what will happen down the road with things like gravel pits, asphalt plants and waste management facilities. At some point, will they be given approval without the input from the local municipal governments? We know they can be very, very controversial.

Before these solar farms and wind farms are all built, we're going to see a lot more demonstrations like we saw here a week ago out on the front lawn, when we had 300 or 400 people objecting to the manner in which this has been done.

The idea of making Toronto the national centre for the financial services regulator is a great idea. I'm sure most of the people in the House would have to agree with that. I think if you looked across the country and you talked to the people in Alberta, BC or Manitoba, a lot of those folks too—even the Parliaments there—would probably agree that this is not a bad move. But I don't think they

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would agree that the Open Ontario plan is the plan for something that they wouldn't want to support in a resolution either.

As we look towards the approval of this resolution, I really wish the government would seriously consider the removal of that part of the motion because, as I said earlier, it's important to us. We, as members of this House, don't think the throne speech indicated a solid, good vision for the province of Ontario in the foreseeable future, and we certainly can't support it.

I'd also like to talk a little bit, while I'm on it—if I've got a couple more minutes left, Mr. Speaker—about our health care system. We've gone through some amazing projects in the last 15, 20 years up in Simcoe county. One of the things I'm most proud of is the fact that we were able to plan and organize, getting through the planning process, the redevelopment and expansion of Soldiers' Memorial Hospital in Orillia. We had a lot of community input, a lot of community fundraising; the province put in their fair share. We're very, very proud of this hospital. You can imagine last week when it came to our attention through the board that in order to balance their books they're going to have to lay off or do away with 26 nursing positions and close 25 hospital beds—in a brand new facility. This has created an outrage in our community.

When we talk about Open Ontario and we talk about trying to come up with a good health and long-term-care system—here we have a hospital that is at capacity at all times, has an excellent reputation, has won awards for its efficiencies in the past, and now we're finding out that in order to be more efficient we have to come up with 26 full-time nursing positions being eliminated. That's unacceptable.

I've got to tell you, I'm going to the hospital tomorrow; I go each year during National Nursing Week. Tomorrow I have to face these nurses and I have to come up with answers as to, "Why does this work? Why does it not work?" They think they're working hard, they think they're efficient, they think they're effective, yet somehow the money is not there to pay them and they're going to be replaced with people who are part-timers.

In my opinion, it will have a negative impact on the hospital, but it has a very negative impact on the morale in the community toward our hospital, because we think it's been a phenomenal hospital. The province came through with the funding to redevelop it, and now, as we look forward, we don't know what the future of that hospital is.

How can you shut down 25 beds over a two-year period when the population is growing and when we need every bed available? We know that our community care access files have been cut by up to 30%, and we've got a lot of sad stories there.

An Open Ontario vision that the government brags about in the throne speech and in the budget does not fit into our plans as a caucus. We think that Ontarians deserve better than a province that is going to have an accumulated debt of a quarter of a trillion dollars by

2017-18. That's a debt that our children and our grand-children will be paying down so we can have some fancy things today. Our grandchildren will be paying those debts off as we look towards their futures. On top of that, we've also got to be concerned about the number of jobs that this throne speech has tried to create. It's pie in the sky; it's Disney World; it's Wonderland. There are just not 591,000 jobs out there. It's amazing when you say that and you talk about Wonderland and Disney World to these folks. They actually believe it, because they wake up—they're there half the time. That's the reality: We are not going to create 591,000 jobs under this Open Ontario plan.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Just so those watching at home know what we're speaking about here, we're debating a motion that has been put forward by the Minister of Finance for a single national regulator based in Toronto. That, of course, we in the New Democratic Party support. The problem is that this motherhood motion, if I can call it that, comes with a bit of poison pie with it, too—no apple pie here, but poison pie—by also calling upon us to endorse their Open Ontario plan.

The Open Ontario plan is a very nice way of saying that this government has no plan: no plan in terms of moving forward for job creation, no plan in terms of moving forward for housing, no plan moving forward for women, no plan moving forward for poverty reduction—

Mr. Paul Miller: Pensions.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: No plan moving forward for pensions, no plan moving forward for transit. That's what I'm going to talk about: the open plan that doesn't exist.

I also have to say, despite the fact that I've got 19 minutes now to say it, that this is an egregious waste of the House's time. This is a motion that a majority Liberal government is putting before the House, asking us to endorse them going to speak to Mr. Harper in Ottawa. Surely, they can do that without taking up the House's time; surely there's more pressing business in the province of Ontario, having lost hundreds of thousands of jobs, coming out of a recession, than to simply tie up the House's time to endorse or not to endorse, as the case may be, something they can do without us. Come on, are they incapable of doing anything without bringing it to the House? That's the problem.

Let's look at Toronto. I'm happy to look at Toronto. I live in Toronto. I love Toronto. I am a born-and-bred Torontonian. Do we want the national securities regulator here in Toronto? Sure, why not? It's a good thing. We'd also actually like to see the report that came out of this committee looking at regulations, a report that a lot of hard work of a lot of deputants went into, that still isn't forthcoming. I have had constituents calling saying, "Where's the report about the securities regulation?"

But first to Toronto. Toronto the centre of financial regulation—not a problem. Toronto, however, is also the centre of poverty and homelessness. That's something I'm concerned about. Toronto is also the centre of grid-

lock and greenhouse gas emissions. That's something I'm extremely concerned about. Do we want Bay Street to do well? We don't have a problem with Bay Street doing well, but quite frankly we'd like to see Main Street doing well as well.

We've had a record number of bankruptcies of small businesses in Toronto. The HST isn't going to help them. In fact, when the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas came to Queen's Park, this government wouldn't even meet with them. They've dispensed with small business as even something that a cabinet minister needs to look at. Where's the small business portfolio? It's gone. It doesn't exist. No longer is small business represented around the cabinet table. Small business came here with one purpose: Representing 30,000 small businesses across the GTA, they wanted to tell this government that 85% of their membership was opposed to the HST—opposed to it—because they know, like we know, that for every dollar that's raised by the HST on the backs of small business and consumers, who can afford it least, \$1.16 goes to big corporations. That's really what the HST is about. That's what small business knows. This government doesn't get it.

They also don't get transit—a \$4-billion cut from transit for the city of Toronto. Yesterday, it took me an hour and a half in gridlocked traffic to get from here to my constituency office in the west end of Toronto. As I drove, I passed people standing 30 and 40 deep at TTC stops. That's rush hour in Toronto right now. What is this government's response to that? To break a promise. To break a promise for transit. At the same time that they're posing as a green government, they break a promise to transit. Oh, they're building transit; they're building lines that will take only the wealthy up to the airport, with diesel trains through our neighbourhoods—not stopping to benefit our neighbourhoods-right from Union Station to the airport, burning diesel all the way. They're willing to do that but they're not willing to put \$4 billion into the lines they promised.

It would be really, really interesting to see the Liberal members—I know the member from Eglinton—Lawrence has stood up, at least in part; at least he's willing to come and table some motions on behalf of his constituents, even if he editorializes those motions and petitions. But he knows that his constituents want the Eglinton LRT line built. They've been waiting 20 years. Jane-Finch residents know, and their member should know, that they want the LRT built. They were promised it. The city of Toronto was promised it. But that's not going to happen.

When you go to other cities anywhere else in the world and compare their transit systems and the way their transit systems are financed by higher levels of government to Toronto's, you are sadly, sadly disappointed, and ashamed, I must say, of the inaction of this government on the transit portfolio.

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Poverty: Toronto is now the national capital of poverty in Canada. We are the national capital. We have one in six children in Ontario living in poverty. We should be

ashamed—ashamed—of that statistic. The 25 in 5: What happened to that? What happened to the poverty reduction plan? Obviously, not much. It doesn't get a lot of mention, does it, in the Open Ontario plan? This government knows it's failing on the poverty file. And, quite frankly, a 25% reduction in poverty isn't good enough. We shouldn't have poverty in the province of Ontario. We're one of the wealthiest jurisdictions in the world. Yet here we are looking at homelessness yet again, a national disaster—it's never been anything but—in the city of Toronto. We still step over bodies on the street sleeping on grates. Have we become so used to that that we don't care anymore? That, in fact, is the stance of this government. It doesn't care anymore about those people.

In—what?—seven years of government, they've promised 20,000 new-build units of housing and managed to roll out about 6,000, if that. We can't even spend the federal dollars that have been delivered to this government on housing. We can't even get those out the door. That's how inept this government has been on the housing file.

It's been so inept that when I put forward my bill on inclusionary zoning, which will be debated again in a couple of weeks, a bill that I must say has garnered incredible support from municipalities across this province—incredible support, a broad range of non-partisan support, I must say, from right to left of the political spectrum among councillors and among municipalities, because they all get that inclusionary zoning is a way of building housing, providing housing, that doesn't cost a tax dime. What it does is what jurisdictions across the United States and across the world are doing, and that is to require of our development community that they set aside at least, conservatively, let's say, 10% of the units that they build, whether housing or apartments, for affordable housing. This could be any number of options. It could be rent-to-own. It could be a myriad of options. My bill doesn't even specify. All it does is get the province out of the way. That is all it does. It gets the province out of the way so if municipalities want to go the inclusionary zoning route, they are able to. Now, my goodness, that's not asking a lot. It is not in any way prescriptive, my bill. All it does is allow municipalities, if they so choose, to bring in inclusionary zoning. My goodness, how revolutionary is that? Yet this government can't even act on that.

I was sorely disappointed to see in the speech from the throne, in this government's so-called Open Ontario plan, not one mention of housing—not one mention. I was hoping at least inclusionary zoning would come from this government. No—nothing. They voted for it and they let it go, they let it die, as they always do: Voted for it, let it go, let it die. I'm going to bring it back. I hope they vote for it again.

Quite frankly, the joy of inclusionary zoning is that in a down market, it's even good for developers, because when you can't sell those units, at least you can get some return on them if you go the affordable housing route. So, really, we should be on board with inclusionary zoning. That's the least we could do, never mind the government's promises, dating back to 2003, to build new-build affordable housing, something that has long been forgotten.

Post-secondary education: In their Open Ontario plan, we have "increasing spaces in colleges and universities for 20,000 students." Nobody's going to argue, really, with that. We know why they're doing it: They are trying to get some money from foreign students into our university systems. But let's look at what this government has actually done with the post-secondary university file. What they've done is ignore it, quite frankly. They've ignored it to the tune of us being 10 out of 10 in terms of per capita funding for students. That is a sorry record indeed: 10 out of 10 in per capita funding for students.

We have the highest tuition fees in Canada. We have the highest student debt in Canada. Do you know how many students have talked to me and said, "I wish I had been born in Quebec"? Why can we not get our act together in terms of post-secondary education? This is something that Canada used to be famous for on the international scene. We had university tuition that was affordable. We had good education systems that could be afforded. We didn't graduate students like they do in the States with \$100,000 worth of debt for a BA.

A wonderful young woman who works for me and wants to go to medical school and is working on her masters in public health told me that when she finishes—listen to this. We should be shocked and appalled at this. In a province where half a million Ontarians don't have family doctors, here's a young woman who wants to go to medical school, is getting her masters in public health and has a BA. By the time she has finished medical school, her student debt will be—take in your breath, because here comes the figure. What do you think it is?

Mr. Paul Miller: A hundred and twenty thousand.
Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Do you think it's higher? Do I hear bids? Higher, higher.

Mr. Paul Miller: One hundred and fifty thousand.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Her total student debt will be \$300,000 to get a medical degree in the province of Ontario.

How many students can even afford to take on that kind of debt? And yet we're a province in a screaming need for GPs, for family doctors. This is outrageous. This is appalling. This leads, of course, to more money, not less expenditure, down the road. This is, as my granny and all of our grannies would say, penny-wise and pound-foolish. This leads to people in my riding going to the emergency room to get primary medical care because they can't get a doctor's care in their community. They have to wait three or four weeks for an appointment. That's what happens. That's penny-wise and pound-foolish, because that's how much it costs to graduate a doctor in the province of Ontario. It's outrageous, disgusting and certainly putting us on the road of the American reality, not what we would hope on this side of the floor. The European reality is where post-secondary education in most countries is free. Imagine that—free. When I was in Sweden, the students were concerned that they weren't being paid enough to go to school. What a difference.

Talking about Sweden, their idea of an open country—and remember they're smaller than we are here, nine million versus 13 million—is not to force a large company with unionized staff, like Xstrata, away from the province. It is not to invite Samsung and other multinational companies where the profits, let's say, and we know, will flow from the province out to some other jurisdiction. That is not most European countries' idea of open for business. Their idea of open for business is to actually help their indigenous business, their own business, their small business become medium-sized business, their medium-sized business, and then to export to other jurisdictions. That is a planned, reasonable approach to growing an economy. That is not the Open Ontario plan to growing Ontario.

The Open Ontario plan to growing the province, in terms of jobs, is to invite large multinationals in and to give them every kind of corporate tax break on the backs of an anti-poverty file, on the backs of building housing, on the backs of saddling our students with debt, on the backs of any kind of money for environmental cleanup or green energy, because there's only a certain amount of tax dollars that we have to spend. If we give it away, if we don't collect it, we don't have it to spend on all of the initiatives that we desperately need.

What do they do in other jurisdictions to grow their economies? They invest in buying from that region, as we have suggested they do here—buy Ontario. We have suggested that what they do is invest in Ontario companies, give contracts to Ontario businesses, build Ontario jobs and build green Ontario jobs at that. That's what we need to do. But that's not in Open Ontario.

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So Open Ontario truly is one of those Orwellian doublespeaks. Because when they say "open," what they really mean is closed—closed to the poor; closed to the students; closed to women who still make 71 cents for every dollar for a man; closed to those increasingly trying to struggle into the middle class. Now we're going to hammer them with a flat regressive tax. But yes, there is some truth to Open Ontario. It's open to the multinationals: Come in, do what you want, and when the labour is not cheap enough or when the environmental regulations get too onerous, pick up and leave, take your jobs with you and owe nothing to the workers that you leave behind or the communities that you've pillaged. That's Open Ontario.

So again, in the few minutes that I've got left to go back to the financial regulations—do we need them? Do we need them in Toronto? We would love them in Toronto, this national regulator. By all means, you have our blessing; go speak to Mr. Harper—as if you need our blessing, on this side of the floor, to speak to the federal government. I mean, surely and hopefully Ontarians are expecting that their government at Queen's Park does that without the say-so of the entire House and hours worth of debate on the issue.

Do we need tighter securities regulations? Oh, yes; excuse me, yes. But this is a government, remember, that

is taking its financial advice from Goldman Sachs. Come on; I mean, incompetent at best, criminal at worst. That's where they go when they need financial advice, and then they're talking about securities regulation? It is to laugh. Our own financial criminals, i.e., Conrad Black, have to be persecuted and prosecuted somewhere else: in the United States. It never would have happened here. because, you know, traditionally in the past we have been an open market. Open market—that's another truism about Open Ontario, for anyone who wants to rip off investors, and now not only rip off investors, but maybe rip off taxpayers too, if we're getting financial advice about selling our precious assets from some institution like Goldman Sachs. Again, thank goodness for the Americans on that file, because they prosecute. We don't; we seek out for financial advice the same companies they're prosecuting. That's how incompetent this government is, and that's how sad it is to be an Ontarian

So should Toronto be the head office? Sure; why not? Is Open Ontario a fallacy? It's worse than that. And should Toronto also be a place where housing is being built, where inclusionary zoning is the law of the land, where poverty is something that is a distant memory, where women make the same amount of money as men, where daycare is accessible for everyone, where children's aid societies are funded to do the work they need to, where nurses are being hired and not let go? Yes. Toronto should also be the capital for all of that as well. And where students can graduate with a degree without being saddled with a mortgage-sized debt for the rest of their lives—yes, Ontario should also be that, and so should Toronto.

Just finally, on the transit file, where a government doesn't cut \$4 billion out of a promise they made to build transit in a city that's desperate—desperate—for a better transit system—that's what would make an open Ontario and that's what would make Toronto a real financial player on the world stage, with an economy that is good for everyone: Main Street as well as Bay Street.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm really pleased to enter into the debate on the motion. I think, as we've heard from a number of members, there are certain components of this motion that are absolutely unequivocal, that we can all support. The motion is made up essentially of three parts: the need for a strong national securities regulator, as opposed to the patchwork that we have at the moment; the point that we want to grow our financial services industry—and I cannot believe that my colleagues from the other two parties do not want to actually do that. They may be quibbling over references to the Open Ontario plan, but surely we all intend to have the strongest financial services industry here in Ontario that we possibly can. The third element of the motion refers to the fact that we all know that Toronto is the most suitable place for the location of this new national securities regulator.

First of all, I'd just like to address the issue of the need for a national securities regulator. We can understand why we do have the 13 regulators across Canada, one for each province and one for each territory: This country is a very vast geographic area, and it was natural, as we were emerging from our pioneer communities, that investment would be local and financial services would be local, but those days are now long gone. Of course, we live in a global economy, and amongst developed nations, we're really the only one that still has subnational levels of regulation.

I remember, some 15 years ago, when I was doing my masters in business administration at York, we were looking at our financial institutions—something that I had very little knowledge of or, frankly, interest in before that time—and being absolutely astonished that there were 13 regulators. It was certainly self-evident to us that there was a need for a national securities regulator. That was some 15 years ago. I would argue that debating the need for a national securities regulator is clearly long overdue, and if we're doing it now, we should do it for some length of time. It is worthy of that effort, and it is something that we've really seen a glacial pace of progress towards.

It is certainly good that the federal government has put in place a transitional structure looking at the movement towards a national securities regulator, but the kind of motion that we have before us today, hopefully, will prod them to get their business done in as expeditious a manner as possible.

I think we all know that having a strong national regulator will mean that we will eliminate some duplication and some restrictions on information-sharing. This kind of fragmented regulatory structure obviously makes it hard for businesses, certainly coming from overseas, to fathom all the various differences in the regulations from province to province. That leads us to know that any strong national securities regulator will be a competitive advantage for us, and we'll be able to attract more international investment. It will make things much easier for those investors to come to our country.

It will reinforce our reputation internationally. During our winter break, I was down in Florida, and I talked to many people down there. They were so envious of the very strong regulatory framework that we have as it relates to our financial institutions here in Canada. Clearly, we escaped the worst of the recession because of those kinds of restrictions, and that is very well recognized. Having the national securities regulator, one place to go, will reinforce and add to our already very strong reputation in this particular regard.

Having said all that, we do know that the Ontario Securities Commission has been working very hard over the last couple of years to really promote their mandate. In other words, they have worked hard to promote the integrity and compliance in Ontario's capital markets. During the past year, in response to the upheavals in the markets, the OSC has even increased the degree of vigilance that it normally proceeds with.

This was a matter of considerable interest for many residents in my riding. Oak Ridges-Markham is a particularly diverse community, and we have a number of people who were following the Ontario Securities Commission's regulatory process very, very closely, including a federal deputy minister from a finance-related portfolio who was updating me constantly on how the OSC was proceeding.

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When you look at the adjudication area, the number of hearing days for matters heard by the commission's tribunal rose by 48% in the last fiscal year. Investigations increased as well, with investigations of alleged breaches of securities law increasing by 23%.

Of course, enforcement is only part of what the OSC does to maintain market integrity. Preventing economic crimes from occurring is a far more effective way in which to deal with these issues, so prevention is certainly much better than punishment. So the OSC has been making really excellent efforts in terms of compliance there, monitoring disclosure filings by public companies. They've conducted compliance reviews of major segments of the investment funds market, including a number of fund managers of money market funds and nonconventional investment funds. This is all to protect investors, of course. So we certainly do have a wonderful base on which to build here in Toronto.

In 2009, our government also made changes to the Securities Act and the Commodity Futures Act to ensure that the province and the OSC have the necessary tools to take immediate action to protect the public interest in the event of extraordinary circumstances involving major market disruption. I think this was certainly a comfort to investors, and a very good step forward.

The OSC just recently, in the last couple of months, created an investor advisory panel that will provide input on the work of the commission, including proposed OSC rules and policies, the OSC's annual statement of priorities, concept papers and specific issues. In other words, they are developing policies that, again, will better protect investors. We have an excellent base to build upon.

Turning to the fact that our Open Ontario plan is clearly working—including, of course, our very courageous decision to move to the HST on July 1 of this year—I noticed in the Star today how well we're doing in terms of Canada scoring well in terms of competitiveness:

"Canada ranks second to Mexico and far ahead of the US on a list of tax-friendly countries for business, according to a new report....

"Lower corporate tax rates can be a huge competitive advantage when companies decide where to set up shop....

"The introduction of the HST in Ontario and British Columbia is likely to enhance Canada's standing in the coming years...."

This is all part of our government's move to make the financial services industry in Ontario as strong as we possibly can.

Many people have very clearly stated that they believe Toronto is the right place for a national securities regulator. I think it's worth repeating because this is something that we really should be proud of, knowing that Toronto is a world-class city. Toronto is the business and financial capital of Canada, it is the centre of the nation-wide capital market, and it is Canada's link to international capital markets, which are becoming increasingly global in nature. Toronto is the securities industry capital of Canada, employing more people than in Canada's next five largest cities combined. Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa and Winnipeg—Toronto's industry is larger than all those combined. So though there may be some talk of a move to London as the right place for the home of the regulator on a sentimental basis, it is clear that Toronto is the logical conclusion for the home of this national securities regulator.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'm partial to Markham.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Markham obviously would be an excellent choice, too, for the precise venue. We have lots of places to build, and of course within such easy access to Toronto.

The TSX is the eighth-largest equity market in the world based on market capitalization. Toronto is home to Canada's five largest banks. Actually, just yesterday evening, I was talking to an executive with the National Bank of Canada, and they're looking at their expansion into the Ontario market with great interest as well. I think we all know that it's very important to have competition between our banks, and Ontario seems to be attracting that market as well. Two of the largest 10 global life insurers, plus three of the four largest Canadian property and casualty insurers, also make Toronto their home; 58 pension fund managers, including the CPP Investment Board, and 119 securities firms also call Toronto home. It really goes on and on.

It is the logical conclusion. I believe that this motion addresses three important components, three messages, that we wish to give to the federal government: first of all, finally, a national securities regulator; the fact that we in Ontario want to grow our financial services industry, building on the incredible strong base that we have; and, thirdly, that the logical location is clearly Toronto, or perhaps, I might say, the greater Toronto area, not to leave Markham out of the running as the home for this.

I know that many others want to enter into this very important debate, including members, obviously, from our side of the House. In conclusion, I am totally in favour of this important motion, and I hope that all colleagues from all three parties will support it.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): It being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30, at which time we'll have question period.

The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I would like to welcome from the Certified Management Accountants of Ontario a few representatives here today: John Hsu, Merv Hillier,

who's the president and CEO, Aina DeViet, John Forester, Ted Ballantyne, Sharon Armstrong and Lindsay Mack. They are also hosting a reception at 11:45 in room 230, and I would request all members to attend.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: On behalf of our fine page from Plummer Additional, which, as the Speaker would know, is a suburb of Bruce Mines, who's doing a fine job here in the Legislature, I'd like to introduce his friend Kathryn Laskaris.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It gives me great pleasure to introduce some people who are here to witness Stig Tripp, one of our pages, as he's page leader today. I have with us in the House in the Speaker's gallery: Harold Tripp, father; Christina Tripp, mother; Paul Tripp, granddad; Margaret Rosback, grandmother; Max Tripp, brother; Catherine Rosback, aunt; and Kelly Cluskey, a family friend. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to invite my colleagues to welcome Mr. Sergio Chiamparino, mayor of Turin, the first capital of Italy.

The city is preparing, together with the country, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy.

Mayor Chiamparino is accompanied by Evelina Christillin, president of the Teatro Stabile in Torino; Raffaella Scalisi, head of international affairs for the city of Torino; Anna Martina, manager of communications, tourism and international promotions for the city of Torino; Corrado Paina, executive director of the Italian Chamber of Commerce of Ontario; and Tiziana Tedesco, director of the trade department of the Italian Chamber of Commerce. I welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would like to welcome to the Montreal Canadiens all their new fans. Go, Habs, go!

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I am absolutely delighted to introduce to you the delegation from the government of Valencia and from Labor Solis. They're here because they're convinced that Ontario is the place to be to promote partnership with government and partnership with business. They are Mr. Enrique Cosi, Mr. Julian Pascual, Mr. Baldemar Asencio, Mr. Luis Sospedra and Mr. Antonio Penja. Welcome.

Remarks in Spanish.

Mr. Charles Sousa: I would like to introduce, in the members' gallery, Ms. Marnie Cooper and Mr. John Crawford, both of who are here representing the Scleroderma Society of Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I would like to introduce members of the International Gas Union who are here today for a tour of the Legislature and some meetings. Joining us today are Mel Ydreos, from Union Gas and chair of the geopolitics and natural gas task force; Jeff Okrucky, from Union Gas; Ho Sook Wah, from Malaysia; Coby van der Linde, from the Netherlands; Dick de Jong, from the Netherlands; Roberto Gregori, from Italy; Abdul Rahim Mahmood, from Malaysia; Graham Moore, from the United States; Sheik Nadeem Shahryar, from Pakistan; Florijana Dedovic, from Norway; Torstein Indrebø, secretary general of the International Gas Union; Jennifer

Durham, from Union Gas; and Matthew Gibson, from Union Gas.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I've got some different delegations here. I want to say that they're not in the assembly yet, but a class from Couchiching Heights Public School in Orillia is here, along with John Winchester's class from Park Street Collegiate Institute.

I have my co-op student from Park Street Collegiate Institute in Orillia, Jessica Clark. She'll be joining us shortly. She's here to see Queen's Park today as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan and page Mary McPherson, to welcome her mother, Tracy Shields, and her sister Sarah McPherson, today to Queen's Park.

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today the consul general of the Republic of Croatia in Toronto, Mr. Liubinko Matešić.

Please join me in welcoming our guests to the Legislature today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Acting Premier. Yesterday, Premier McGuinty said he expected businesses to lower prices as a result of his HST, but the businesses he runs won't.

Why would Premier McGuinty expect businesses to lower prices when he isn't willing to do so himself?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think we've been pretty clear about it. We announced in the 2009 budget the alcohol pricing, and then in the fall budget, in this book, on page 35, I'll remind the member what we laid out and what we said. We're getting rid of two sales taxes—harmonizing with the GST—which affects other outdated fees on alcohol. Therefore, we are bringing clarity to the system—this is right out of the book that was published and distributed in this House—with four policy objectives in mind:

- (1) "Maintain the revenue that would be lost in lowering the ... rates on alcohol....
- (2) "Mirror the current system as closely as possible and" level the playing field across all distribution channels;
- (3) "Generate no net new revenue for the province and ... minimize any changes to consumer prices; and
- (4) "Create a structure that would continue to promote social responsibility."

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Ontario families are getting a very mixed message here because the Premier keeps saying that businesses will lower their prices when the HST is implemented. But the first test of what he's telling Ontario families is with the crown corporations he runs. At the same time he's pressuring businesses to

lower their prices, the Premier has directed the LCBO to mark up their prices when the HST comes in.

What makes the McGuinty Liberals think that businesses would lower their prices when they can just follow the Premier's lead and make consumers pay more?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have been very clear in the budget with respect to social reference pricing. We were very clear in the fall statement. We laid it out in this book. It's on page 35. There are four pages describing what we are doing with that.

Social reference pricing is an important part of helping to ensure that we maintain a system of health care and other supports in terms of financing the challenges associated with alcohol. I would remind the member that her party raised the social reference price some three times on alcohol.

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This is an appropriate and balanced policy. We also expect, by the way, that the bars and grills in Ontario that serve alcohol should see a tax cut of some \$24 million.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Once again, it always comes down to reading the fine print with this government. What you hear is not necessarily the way it is. Prices on wine and liquor should be coming down after July 1, but Steve Erwin of the LCBO is quoted as saying that you ordered a mark-up in prices to grab back the 4% difference in tax.

Why should Ontario families expect other businesses to do as you say and not as you do?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Pages 35, 36, 37 and 38 of the budget document outline it. Not only does it say what we're doing with respect to replacing alcohol fees, it details how it will break down by type; it details how it will break down by revenue change and distribution network.

But here we see the shifty Conservative Party. They try to criticize the HST, which their federal partners support, and then, when you ask them if they will repeal it, they kind of shift around and say, "Well, you know, no." They used to say that this was the right thing to do; now they say it's the wrong thing to do.

I'm with the federal member for Whitby-Oshawa, who recognizes the importance of this policy, and with the federal government in Ottawa, who have helped make it happen.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock for a moment. Order.

New question.

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Again to the Acting Premier: Yesterday, Dalton McGuinty said that businesses will lower prices when the HST is implemented. You know that can't be true because you're not legislating it as so, so I've got a quick question for you—I hope you can

answer: Was it the Premier, the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Revenue who called the LCBO to tell them that he was kidding and it did not apply to crown corporations?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: No. We said very clearly in the budget what we are doing on pages 34, 35, 36 and 37. I'd invite the member to read that.

We believe that socially responsible pricing is important, as did the member's party opposite when they raised it three times. It's clear, it's unequivocal and it's the right public policy to pursue in Ontario. It remains revenue-neutral to the government of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: We know for a fact that this HST is not revenue-neutral; it's a \$3-billion tax grab that hurts seniors and small businesses the most.

But I think what's most confusing about all of this is that they are confusing businesses and consumers based on Dalton McGuinty's comments just yesterday. He's telling them to lower prices when he refuses to do so with the businesses that he runs. Those working with the LCBO say that based on the Premier's HST sales pitch, consumers "should be expecting a reduction" in prices. That is not forthcoming.

Why is the Premier trying to make families believe that the HST will lead to lower prices when this greedy \$3-billion tax grab will not?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'd invite the member to read the budget and see what we said about the pricing of alcohol in the spring and fall of 2009.

I would refer the member to the Conference Board of Canada, the C.D. Howe Institute and a range of independent organizations that have all said conclusively that the HST will result in lower prices on many goods and services. This is the right policy. Just today, KPMG is out with a report saying that Canada's competitive tax position in the world has now moved from third to second as a result of this government's policies.

It's the appropriate policy. I know the member wants to stick to the old ways and that shifty Tory way of saying one thing and not doing another. Accordingly, this is the right policy for Ontario's future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The finance minister used that term once, and the second time, on reflection, I don't think it is parliamentary. I would ask him to withdraw that comment.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'll withdraw it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Final supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: This Acting Premier, the real Premier and his revenue minister can continue to cite all the third party reports they want, but their own actions show that the prices will not come down after the HST is implemented. They know the truth. They should tell this chamber the truth.

Industry insiders say the McGuinty Liberals want to "preserve government revenue ... it's not about social responsibility; it's all about revenue." The HST is a greedy tax grab after all.

My final question: Why won't you give Ontario families another cleansing moment of truth and just admit that this is going to be a \$3-billion tax grab that seniors, small businesses and middle-class families are going to be hosed by?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I take the word of the C.D. Howe Institute. I take the word of a whole group of individuals who actually put their name on what they're saying, not some anonymous industry source.

If that member and her party are so interested in lowering prices, why won't they support us on lowering drug prices, instead of standing up for the big drug interests in Ontario?

This tax package is right for Ontario's future. It is right for the future of this country. That's why that member's federal party supports this. It is right for the people of Ontario. It will create jobs, raise incomes and raise capital investment. It's the right thing to do for a better future for Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There are a number of members who want to participate and it would be much more helpful to the Speaker if they were participating from their own seats.

New question.

TAXATION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Acting Premier. Today, the Toronto Star reminded us that the LCBO will not be passing on a tax cut July 1. Consumers won't benefit from lower prices. If consumers won't see savings passed through at the government's own liquor store, why should they expect any other company to pass on HST savings?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Again, a point to the member: We spoke quite at length about this last November. It's right there. It outlines not only what the policy is, but our commitment to the social reference pricing for alcohol.

I'm delighted to participate in the debate around this, and that's why we spelled it out very clearly last November. If you and your party haven't had a chance to read the details—and it's in the front end of the book—that's unfortunate, because if you look at the whole package, if you look at what the independent sources say, if you look at what anybody without a partisan hat on says, this is the right policy to pursue for Ontario, the right policy to pursue for Canada. It will create jobs, raise capital investment and raise family incomes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a shame that the minister missed the question. The thing is, Minister, I've been listening to the response of the government for a while about this issue. Time after time, we're told that, in fact, prices will come down. That's one of the saving graces of the HST. You can wrap yourself in the budget flag as much as you want, but why should consumers believe that oil, gas and hydro companies will pass their savings on to the public if you don't do it yourself?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I remind the member again that it's actually the C.D. Howe Institute that says that. TD Economics, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Hugh Mackenzie and Mothers Against Drunk Driving support this policy. It was clearly defined in the budget. It is the right policy, just as the HST is the right policy for Ontario. It's backed up by independent analysis. Independent analysts universally agree that it will create jobs, raise incomes and raise capital investment. It's the right policy for a better future for Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: What's really happening here? The government says families won't pay more because of the HST, but it turns out the average Ontario family will pay \$800 a year more. The government says its tax cuts and credits will make the HST pain go away magically, but it turns out that families will end up \$470 a year behind. The government says businesses will pass on savings, but it turns out that even the system that you own, the LCBO, won't be passing on those savings. Your claims are falling apart on the affordability part of your program. Why should we believe anything you say about the HST when you can't deliver on your own government-owned system?

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Hon. Dwight Duncan: We chose a deliberate policy with respect to the social reference pricing of alcohol. It's clearly detailed.

I would remind the member what TD Bank's economists reported: About 80% of the expected total cost savings will be passed along immediately in the first year that the HST comes into effect, with that ratio eventually reaching 95% by year three, and with the full cost savings of these firms to take up to six years to feed through to consumers.

This policy is absolutely the right policy for the future of this province. It is about creating new jobs. It is about raising capital investment. It is about raising family incomes. That's why we're proceeding with it. It's right for Ontario today, but, more importantly, for a better future for all Ontarians.

HOSPITAL GOVERNANCE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Yesterday the Minister of Health said that her ministry had no role in the Ontario Hospital Association's development of new, somewhat controversial bylaws, yet this morning media reports quote insiders saying that she did. Can the minister clear the air and tell Ontarians who is telling the truth?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me be very clear: The OHA is an association of hospital organizations. They draft bylaws that are a template for hospitals to accept or modify as they wish. It is the hospital board that determines the bylaws of that hospital. This is a conversation

that's happening among the hospital sector, and I think that's where the conversation belongs.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary? M^{me} France Gélinas: I guess from this answer that the ministry had nothing to do.

When I travelled across the province with the Ontario Health Coalition, attending health care town halls in many of the communities hardest hit by service reductions, I frequently heard from physicians. Physicians talked about the impact of emergency room, physiotherapy and surgery closures and cutbacks. Physicians saw first-hand how these cuts were impacting their patients, and they felt they had an obligation to speak out for their patients.

Under these new bylaws, physicians may no longer have a voice. Does the minister think that muzzling physicians will benefit Ontario's patients?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me repeat: In Ontario we have a system of hospitals where local boards govern the hospitals. We are expanding the role of those boards with our new Excellent Care for All Act. We will add the responsibility for ensuring ever-improving quality in our hospitals through that legislation. But it is up to the boards to determine what is included in their bylaws. The Ontario Hospital Association is an association of those member hospitals.

What I can say, though, is that when I announced the Excellent Care for All bill, I was joined at the podium by representatives from the Ontario Medical Association, the Registered Nurses' Association, and the Ontario Hospital Association. We are at our best when we all work together, and that is the culture that we are building within the health care sector.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is concerning that the government seems to have no problem when a new system of regulation limits the free speech of physicians, physicians who want to speak up for quality care for their patients, but when it comes to bringing full transparency and accountability to our hospitals, then the same ministry stalls.

Privacy Commissioner Cavoukian urged this government to bring the hospitals under freedom-of-information requests. She did that in 2004, but the ministry is not moving. The NDP has long told the government that this must happen. Even the Ontario Hospital Association wants this to happen.

So here we have a minister who's prepared to let physicians be silenced and who refuses to bring hospitals under freedom of information. What happened to this minister's quest for transparency and accountability?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Make no mistake about it: We are absolutely committed to improving transparency and accountability throughout government and in the health care sector.

I'm pleased that the Ontario Hospital Association has suggested that we take a look at allowing freedom of information for hospitals, but it's very important we get this right. That's why we're working with our partner organizations: the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Ontario Hospital Association and their member organizations. We need to work together to get this right. There are nearly 160 hospitals in this province. They have very sensitive personal health information, and it's very important to me, as we move forward in improving accountability and transparency, that we are very cognizant of the privacy issues.

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is for the Minister of Revenue. Yesterday, we cited a May 2009 KPMG Canada report that says Dalton McGuinty's HST will make Ontario patients pay more to get less health care. When the Premier struggled for the answer on his HST, he handed the question off to Minister Wilkinson, who said he had read the KPMG report. I'm glad he's got it in his hand right now because then he can answer this question: Why would you make up that the KPMG report said the net impact of the HST on doctors will be small when the report says no such thing?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my friend for the question.

I do have the report, and I say to the member from Whitby—Oshawa—she was talking about an analysis done by someone who worked for KPMG, and I was referring to the report prepared by KPMG dated June 29, 2009, which I read when it came out, I might add. What it says is that for a typical, unincorporated family physician, the tax costs of operating a practice will increase by \$1,488 when the income that they report for taxes of that practice—that's just their income, the profit to the doctor; not the total cost—was \$157,000. On \$157,000, if we're talking about \$1,400, that doesn't seem to be a large increase to me.

So what it says here is that there is an impact—because we don't charge HST, GST or PST on health services that are provided by the public system, that are funded by the public system—and that doctors understand we need to do something to ensure that we have the revenue base to afford the finest—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'll stick with the analysis that was given to the member for Whitby-Oshawa than the analysis given by the Minister of Revenue any day. He should stick to the report.

Minister Wilkinson has been hanging around with Dalton McGuinty a little too long. The Premier's bad habits are starting to rub off on you, my friend.

You said—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Please continue.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I apologize, Mr. Speaker, for getting under their skin so early on a Thursday morning.

You said KPMG reported on the net impact of the HST for doctors when they did not. You said the report is dated; it is less than a year old. You said KPMG found that the overall impact of the HST will be "somewhere in the neighbourhood of 1.6%," but the report did not say that.

No wonder the Liberal caucus is worried over there. If Dalton McGuinty and his top HST salesmen are making up KPMG findings on the HST, the big question is, what else are they making up?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just ask the honourable member to withdraw that comment.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to correct the record. I thought yesterday it was 1.6%; it's actually less than 1%. So, absolutely, I thought I'd be a bit conservative in my estimate and make sure I was a bit on the high side when I had to remember something that I had read in July of last year.

You have to understand, on this side of the House we have a plan to attract \$47 billion worth of more investment and get 591,000 people back to work. On the other side, they have no plan. Their plan is, don't change—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Oxford will please come to order. The member from Renfrew knows the rules.

Minister.

Hon. John Wilkinson: We reject the twins of the status quo over there who say that we should just hang on to the status quo though the world has changed. We reject your leader, who I've said is "Two-tax Tim." He believes there should be two taxes in this province when it comes to sales tax. There should just be one.

1100

I want to thank John Baird, Prime Minister Harper, Jim Flaherty and so many Conservatives who understand that this is the right thing to do—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

Mr. Peter Kormos: My question is to the Attorney General. Why has the Ministry of the Attorney General instructed its lawyers to withdraw from their representation of SIU director Ian Scott in the Minty and Schaeffer application?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: As I believe I said the other day, it is common practice for lawyers employed by the government to assist in the representation of independent agencies when they are before courts and tribunals. There arose an issue in this particular case about the lawyers representing that party, and rather than have the issue focus on the lawyers, the lawyers are withdrawing. SIU will retain independent representation so

the issues before the court can be the issues that should be before the court, not the lawyers.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Kormos: The SIU is an agency of the Ministry of the Attorney General. The Ontario Provincial Police Association has blasted the Ministry of the Attorney General for its legal assistance to Director Scott. Is that why the AG lawyers have been pulled from the case, but only with respect to Mr. Scott and not Fantino?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: No. As I indicated, I believe, in answer to my friend's question a few days ago, the government has taken no position on the matter before the court involving the SIU and the other parties. The lawyers were there to assist the independent agency. The SIU is independent. It makes its decisions independently. It does not take instructions from the Ministry of the Attorney General or the government.

In order for the issues before the court to remain the focus of the court's proceedings, the government lawyers are withdrawing. The SIU will retain its independent counsel so the focus can remain on the issues and the proceedings can continue in that fashion.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS

Mr. Charles Sousa: My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. Yesterday, the minister introduced the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. I understand that this act, if passed, would provide a modern legal framework for not-for-profit corporations.

The minister said yesterday that the not-for-profit sector is vibrant. I know first-hand that in my riding of Mississauga South there are several not-for-profit organizations doing great work. Just recently, the Compass drop-in centre in my riding joined forces with the Mississauga Food Bank to provide even greater services for residents, and the Lakeshore Corridor Community Team does incredible work connecting people who need help with those who can provide help in goods and services.

Why is the minister introducing new legislation to govern these organizations? What's in it for them?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: Thank you very much to the honourable member for the question. He's right: The not-for-profit corporations in Ontario really are a vibrant sector, and they told us that the act was out of date and that it wasn't useful to them. In fact, it was very old. The last time that this act was even worked on was in 1953, which is 57 years ago.

If this act is passed, it will help our not-for-profit sector. There's 46,000 of them all across Ontario. They're worth \$50 billion in revenue each and every year, and they employ almost one million people in this sector.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Charles Sousa: Again, to the Minister of Consumer Services: I'm interested to hear how the Ministry of Consumer Services came to the conclusion that the

legislation needed to be revised. Not-for-profit corporations have limited resources, and I'm concerned that this will create more administration for the not-for-profit sector.

As a past president of the Federation of Portuguese Canadian Business and Professionals, I know the challenges that not-for-profits face. In south Mississauga, in my office, we're working with a group called Windfall, which collects new clothing from manufacturers and then distributes it to the most vulnerable. They are currently working on expanding into my community, and we look forward to welcoming them.

Can the minister tell the House how the proposed legislation would affect the administration burden of not-for-profits, and did the minister seek their feedback before introducing the bill?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: Thank you again to the member for the question.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Members will please come to order.

Minister?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: Thank you very much to the member for Mississauga South for the question. In fact, we are seeking more feedback from different sectors for the new act.

The new act, if passed, would simplify and lighten administrative burdens for many not-for-profit organizations. In fact, it will do three things. It will simplify the incorporation process, it will enhance corporate governance and accountability, and it will become consistent with other jurisdictions like the province of Saskatchewan and the federal government.

If passed, it will help not-for-profit corporations, and we really look forward to working with all of them.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Minister of Health. Three years ago, Premier McGuinty launched the aging-at-home strategy to take pressure off emergency rooms, alternative level of care beds and long-term-care waiting lists by helping Ontario seniors live in their own homes. But after three years and a quarter of a billion dollars spent, pressure on emergency rooms is up 12% and there's been no improvement in alternative level of care beds. Wait-lists for long-term-care beds have doubled since the McGuinty Liberals took office.

How did you manage to spend a quarter of a billion dollars on an aging-at-home strategy with no results?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me tell you that supporting increased access to urgent care, bringing down wait times in emergency departments and making sure that people who are in hospital but should be and could be in the community are all very high priorities and pressing problems in our health care system.

There's no mistaking the reality that we have currently. Approximately 17% of people in our hospitals don't

need to be in hospitals; they could be better served in the community. The aging-at-home strategy has been a resounding success in that it has allowed community organizations to be supported to keep people in their homes longer. It proves to be a stubborn problem, but having that local flexibility through aging-at-home dollars—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: This is a huge problem. The McGuinty Liberals like to boast about how much more they're spending, but when it comes to the actual results they're getting, they are pretty quiet about that because the fact is that nothing is happening.

An order paper question signed by the former health minister, David Caplan, proves that 97% of the long-term-care beds opened on your watch were actually created by the Ontario Progressive Conservatives under our term. Under the McGuinty Liberals' watch, here are some stats: The number of Ontario seniors waiting for a long-term-care bed has doubled from 12,846 people in 2003, to 25,206 people in 2010.

So if the money you have invested didn't go to improving results, where has it gone?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We are very focused on improving care for people who are at the stage in life where they need extra supports. We are of the firm belief that, while long-term-care homes are the right choice for many people, there are many others who could, with the right supports, stay in their own community.

I can tell you that our community care access centres, our LHINs and our hospitals are all working together to tackle this difficult problem. The aging-at-home strategy is an important part but not the total part of the solution when it comes to finding the right continuum of supports, the right range of supports in our communities. As I say, this is a problem that we are tackling head on.

LABOUR DISPUTE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre adjoint. I want to quote from a letter from Ken Lewenza, the president of the Canadian Auto Workers, to the Premier about the labour dispute in Sudbury:

"I urge you to work with the United Steelworkers union and this employer to get back to the bargaining table to reach a fair and equitable settlement. I would also urge your government that if Vale Inco continues in their attempts to put replacement workers in this community, you must immediately bring in anti-scab legislation to prevent these types of actions."

I want to know if the Deputy Premier agrees with Ken Lewenza. Does he support anti-scab legislation?

1110

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Our government believes that we need to find a solution to the ongoing labour dispute. I know that the member for Sudbury, Mr. Bartolucci, the Premier and the Minister of Labour have all been very active. The Ministry of Labour continues to have

available and ready the resources needed to help bring those parties together.

I think we all agree that the sooner this labour dispute is resolved at the bargaining table, the better it will be for the community of Sudbury, for the workers involved directly in the strike and, indeed, for all Ontarians.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'll remind the members once again that interjections are often healthy to the debate, but it's much more acceptable to the Speaker that those interjections come from the members' own seats.

Supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: My question was about antiscab legislation, and this answer was what I would say is as clear as mud.

I'd like to read another quote to the Deputy Premier, and it goes as follows: "Obviously, the government is saying that it advocates and supports the use of scabs in Ontario, an absolutely terrible, extreme position that thoughtful commentators and thoughtful jurisdictions anywhere cannot agree to."

Do you want to know who said that? It was the Deputy Premier, Mr. Dwight Duncan, while sitting in opposition.

Does the Deputy Premier still support anti-scab legislation?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: With respect to the very difficult situation in Sudbury, we are bringing all the resources of the government to bear to try to get the two parties to resolve this very difficult circumstance. That's what's first and foremost in our minds: getting a resolution to this situation as quickly as possible. It is a difficult situation which we continue to monitor very carefully.

As I, again, remind the House, the member for Sudbury, Mr. Bartolucci, the Premier and others—the Minister of Labour—are all working hard to find a solution to this difficult situation, which has been going on for far too long.

PHARMACISTS

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Recently, the pharmacy associations said they agreed with our reforms and the need to eliminate professional allowances, although this week in my riding, they continue to target seniors with misinformation and drop flyers at every home. However, my constituents are hoping they will agree, especially after hearing that we pay up to five times more for drugs in this province compared to the US. It's clear that about 70% of the \$750 million paid in so-called "professional allowances" does not go toward direct patient services. This money would be much better spent on more health services, specifically more low-cost drugs for Ontarians.

Could the minister please tell this House how the money saved through our drug reforms will benefit pharmacies and patients?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: While others are putting their energy into a multi-million-dollar American-style campaign of fearmongering and misinformation, we are putting our energy into getting lower drug prices for the people of Ontario. Every penny we save will go back into the health care system, providing better front-line care and providing access to more drugs for more people.

We are also committed to supporting pharmacists. That's why we propose to increase dispensing fees to pharmacists for the prescriptions they provide under the Ontario drug benefit plan by up to \$4 for those in rural and underserviced areas; \$1 for all pharmacies. We're also going to be compensating pharmacies directly for those vital services that front-line pharmacists provide.

This is the right thing to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My constituents will be very happy to hear about the steps that we're taking to deliver the best care to Ontarians. I'm also happy to hear that drug cost savings will eventually lead to access to more drugs.

I know we often send out notices to pharmacists about new drugs being added to the formulary, and I know that Ontarians look forward to more of these updates adding drugs going out. I understand that there's also a special drug access program that patients can apply for in exceptional circumstances. This often occurs for serious illnesses that require very expensive drugs, and all of us deal with these requests in our constituency offices.

I understand the government's new plan includes lower costs for drugs and an end to professional allowances, but can the minister please provide more details?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It is our proposed reforms that will make more formulary updates possible. Just last month, we announced a number of new drugs that would be added to the formulary, drugs that treat people with hypertension, high blood pressure, Parkinson's disease, HIV, and other conditions.

The exceptional access program is a program that allows physicians to apply for drug funding for patients in exceptional circumstances. Last year, Remicade was the most frequently requested drug in the exceptional access program. Over 2,000 people with Crohn's disease or other conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis benefited, at a cost to the government of \$44 million. The savings for that individual would be perhaps \$20,000.

The savings in our proposed reforms will allow us to add more—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Deputy Premier: This morning the chair of the OSPCA announced that they have put a stop to the mass euthanasia plan at their York region shelter. To his credit, Rob Godfrey, the chair, admitted that they got it wrong, and they want to make it right. They'll now be testing animals individually and treating them individually.

Will the Deputy Premier now admit that his government got it wrong too—that by washing their hands of this issue, and not insisting on a second look at this plan, that more than 100 animals were in fact euthanized? Will he agree with me that what's needed is a full investigation to determine how this crisis developed and who was responsible?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I thank the member for his question. The minister responsible acted in the best interest of all concerned. He spoke, was at ongoing discussions with the OSPCA, which is an independent organization—it is defined that way in legislation. It's a terrible situation, and I think people across the province shared the concern of the member opposite with respect to what was happening with the animals. The OSPCA has shown itself capable of managing these situations. It is defined in legislation that they are independent; it is their role. The minister responsible had an ongoing dialogue, as I understand it, with the OSPCA. Our government welcomed the decision they took this morning, and we look forward to their continuing appropriate stewardship of this situation and, indeed, many other difficult situations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: The minister should have intervened when I first called on him to do so. Instead, he washed his hands and claimed that he was neutered by his own legislation, claimed that as a result of legislation that this government passed, he had no authority. Will the Deputy Premier now agree that his legislation got it wrong; that what is needed is a change to legislation; that there in fact is proper government oversight of agencies such as this? Will he agree to work with us to bring in legislation that will provide the proper oversight for organizations such as this to ensure circumstances like this will never happen again?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have followed the legislation as it is defined. The government always welcomes discussions about legislation, in this case, whether the oversight provisions are adequate. We believe they are. We have confidence in the OSPCA. Again, the OSPCA has taken, in my view, the appropriate decision this morning. We continue to rely on them for their expert judgment. The legislation is premised, as I understand it, on the need to have veterinarians and other professionals make these decisions. The legislation's premise, I believe, is appropriate. I believe that this government will continue to work with the OSPCA and others who have animal welfare interests at heart and continue to work with—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

1120

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. Last week, you were at that FONOM meeting. At that particular meeting, there were many questions in regards to the whole issue of processing ores in Ontario. In that particular bear-pit you were involved in, you alluded to how your government was going to ensure that in fact refining and smelting happens out of the Ring of Fire. How, pray tell, are you going to make that happen if we don't have the legislative force to make it happen, knowing that companies have already indicated that they're not going to be processing ore in Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I appreciate the question. It was great to be at FONOM. I was there with my colleagues the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Minister of Natural Resources. We had a great opportunity in the bear-pit to discuss those questions.

As for the Ring of Fire, we all know what an exciting economic development opportunity it is. We also know that we need to manage this process well. Certainly, we have every intention, when and if we move forward with this process, to be sure that we get the best value-added opportunities there, which include processing and refining the product that comes out of that ground in the province of Ontario.

Those discussions are ongoing. I'm certainly having discussions directly with the companies that are involved in this process, as we're having discussions with the First Nations and, obviously, other stakeholders involved.

We are very committed to this, and it's important for you to know that. We are very optimistic that indeed—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I heard the word "committed" and I heard the word "discussion," all of which didn't mount up to anything when it came to stopping the closure of the Xstrata refinery-smelter in the city of Timmins. Why should we have any more confidence in your government, when you are not able to hang onto the very refinery-smelter that is operating in Ontario now, to do a better job when it comes to ensuring that at the very least, when the Ring of Fire goes forward, refining and smelting continue in Ontario? Why should we have any confidence in you?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: As the member knows very well, we have an extraordinary government-wide commitment to the Ring of Fire development. It's part of our Open Ontario plan. In our budget we made commitments related to \$45 million for skills development and also the hiring of a Ring of Fire coordinator. This is a long-term, complicated process but one that is going to provide us with some extraordinary economic opportunities.

Indeed, we recognize that one of the challenges will be making sure that those processes, in terms of the value-added opportunities, take place. Those are the discussions we're having now. We look forward to working with all of the stakeholders. I've got meetings with the companies that are involved with this.

This is something that we recognize as one of our responsibilities, certainly our ministry's responsibility, to see the economic opportunities. The thousands of jobs

that will be coming forward as a result of this will happen as a result of our government's commitment to the Ring of Fire development.

TAXATION

Mr. Khalil Ramal: My question is for the Minister of Revenue. Minister, the London area has benefited from the good jobs which are generated by the manufacturing industry, like 3M, General Dynamics Land Systems, Trojan, Purifics and many others. As Ontario recovers from the global recession, we need to become more competitive to ensure that investment and jobs continue to come to ridings like London-Fanshawe.

Yesterday, KPMG released a special report on tax competitiveness which found Canada the second-most competitive jurisdiction out of 10 countries worldwide. Greg Wiebe, KPMG's managing partner, said, "The upcoming harmonized sales tax contributed to Canada's improved ranking in this year's report."

Can you tell me, Minister, how this is going to benefit London and Ontario?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to commend my friend for understanding that what London needs is 21st-century jobs. That's what the good people of London-Fanshawe and the people in London need. That's what all of our communities need.

We have, of course, Dr. Jack Mintz, who talked about the number of jobs, but is that being confirmed by others in the marketplace? I have some quotes:

The HST "will mean more investment in the province, and more jobs" says Telus.

HST "savings will help to preserve jobs in Ontario allow companies to grow in the future," says the Canadian Chemical Producers' Association.

"A single sales tax will save jobs," says the Railway Association of Canada.

"The single most important step that can be taken to boost the provincial economy and create job opportunities" is the HST and our tax reforms, says Jayson Myers, president, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters.

"This is the most effective tax change to stimulate investment and job creation," says Roger Martin, the dean of the Rotman School—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: The Conference Board of Canada released their quarterly provincial outlook report this week. The report states that Ontario will lead all other provinces this year in economic growth, at 3.8% this year and 3.7% next year.

TD Canada Trust, which employs a large number of people locally, provides financial services, and Bell Canada provides good jobs in the communications industry in the London area. Bell Canada has said that the implementation of the single sales tax structure in 2010 means Bell can accelerate its investment in the province of Ontario for next year.

Minister, the HST means good jobs for London-Fanshawe and across the province of Ontario. Can you tell me, and tell the Conservatives and the NDP why they are opposing the HST and why they are stirring the pot and scaring the people of this province?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank Bell Canada for believing in this province, believing in your community and understanding that there is a brighter future, but it requires a number of things.

First, it requires a government that understands that our businesses are in an increasingly competitive global economy. We have to do our part by ensuring, as the Conference Board has said, that we are one of the most competitive jurisdictions in the world. We set the conditions, but it is up to the private sector to make those investments in their productivity, make those investments in their people and make those investments to attract the type of work and jobs that our children and our grand-children need.

That's why we will not listen to the proponents of the status quo over there who say that the best thing we can do is nothing. That's why on this side of the House we know there is something we can do. We reject the donothing opposition. On this side of the House, we are committed to doing what's required to make sure we—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

NURSES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I did want to indicate that Caffy Pinnell's grade 5 class from Couchiching Heights Public School is here now.

My question today is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, I'd like to read a quote from Ms. Sandra Tansely, president of the Ontario Nurses Association at Soldiers' Memorial Hospital in Orillia: "Registered nurses are an endangered species, and if we do not do something about this, they will become extinct.

"Do you know that across the province, health care facilities are reducing the number of registered nurses and reducing the hours of nursing care so vital to patients' well being?

"Do you know that as registered nursing hours are reduced your health is put at risk?"

Minister, do you agree or disagree with the statement by Ms. Tansely?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I completely disagree with the statement. We have made some very important investments in improving the availability of nurses, the supply of nurses and the scope of practice of nurses across the province. In fact, this is Nursing Week, so we're all very focused on the important role that nurses play in our health care system.

We have more than 10,000 more nurses working in Ontario today than when we took office in 2003. Nurses are taking on new roles in the health care system. Nurse practitioner-led clinics are providing primary front-line

health care to people in the province, and we're expanding the number of nurse practitioner-led clinics.

This afternoon, I'm going to the de Souza Institute, where I'll be meeting with nurses who are playing an expanded role in the treatment of cancer patients—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Sup-

plementary?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I will be visiting Soldiers' Memorial Hospital tomorrow to accompany nurses during national Nursing Week. I do this each year at a different location in my riding. You are aware that the citizens of Ontario have been hit with the health premium and the \$1-billion eHealth boondoggle, and now face the tax grab of the HST on July 1. Up our way, community care access files have been cut by 30%. This amounts to billions and billions of dollars.

Can you tell me how I should respond to the fact that a week ago, the hospital announced the elimination of 26 nursing positions and the closing of 26 beds in a hospital that just completed a program that has taken the last 15 years to redevelop and expand? I'm going to have to give those answers tomorrow to those nurses at that hospital.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: What I'm going to suggest to the member opposite is that, when he is visiting Soldiers' Memorial Hospital, he ask about the nursing graduate guarantee program. It's a terrific program, an expression of our confidence in nurses in this program. My understanding is that, actually, 39 nursing graduates have received their first full-time job through this program at Soldiers' Memorial Hospital.

The future of nursing is very, very bright indeed in this province. I also would like you to maybe ask about the RNAO's position on what our government has done when it comes to nursing in this province. They say that this government should be congratulated for the investments we've made in nursing.

1130

I wish you all the best on your Take your MPP to Work Day. I know that many of my colleagues are doing the same, to learn about the important work that front-line nurses do.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Michael Prue: My question again is to the Minister of Health. In March, the Ottawa Hospital signed an agreement with nurses, orderlies and other health professionals who make that hospital work. That same month, the Minister of Finance stood in his place during the budget deliberations and said that all collective agreements would be honoured. Last week, the hospital announced that they could not honour their agreement with the workers because of this government's cuts to hospitals.

My question: Why is this government putting patient care at risk by urging hospitals to renege on agreements that they have signed and this government guaranteed?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: There is no question that we are facing financial challenges in this province. We have a deficit that all of us would agree is too large. We

need to get back to a strong fiscal footing. We need to ask all of us—all of us, frankly, who are paid by tax-payers—to take a bit of a pause when it comes to increases in our compensation. I think it's the right thing to do.

I know that people who work in the health care system have seen the impacts of governments choosing to slash programs, to cut spending and to open collective agreements. Our government is taking a much more thoughtful and fair approach.

All our partners in health care need to do their part to ensure that our health care system is strong for future generations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: To the contrary: I think this government has created a mess at the Ottawa Hospital that will put patients at risk. The nurses, orderlies and health professionals who make the hospital work had a signed agreement. This government guaranteed that that signed agreement would be honoured, and now the hospital is being pushed by the government to rip it up. The result will be uncertainty for patients and long legal battles, or both. Why is the minister putting patient care at risk by forcing hospitals to rip up agreements with nurses, orderlies and other professionals—an agreement that you guaranteed, during the budget deliberations, would be honoured?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I have to take exception to the member opposite's words that things are a mess at the Ottawa Hospital. Indeed, the Ottawa Hospital is a very, very fine hospital and is a leader in this province when it comes to improving quality of care for patients. I do hope that the member will clarify his remarks. The Ottawa Hospital, under the very, very capable and proud leadership of Jack Kitts, is one of the finest hospitals in this province.

This government has been a strong supporter when it comes to funding at the Ottawa Hospital. In fact, we've increased spending at the Ottawa Hospital by 42% since we came to office. That means more—

IMMIGRATION POLICY

Mr. Glen R. Murray: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship. I was pleased to join the minister when he recently announced changes to the Opportunities Ontario provincial nominee program. This program provides a pathway to permanent residency for high-skilled workers who were educated or trained abroad.

As many members of this Legislature know, students from around the world come to Ontario to study at our universities, which are among the best in the world. Many of those students graduate with skills that are in high demand here in Ontario. A Statistics Canada study, for example, found that one of the key challenges facing Canada will be retaining Ph.D. graduates upon the completion of their education.

Can the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration tell this House what the government is doing to retain more highly educated international Ph.D. students? Hon. Eric Hoskins: I want to first thank the member from Toronto Centre for this very important question.

Attracting the best and brightest talent from around the world is a priority for the McGuinty government because we recognize that in an open Ontario, a highly skilled workforce is essential to ensure that our province remains both strong and prosperous. That is why our government is taking action to help more international Ph.D. students stay in our province when they graduate. Changes that we have recently made to Opportunities Ontario, our provincial nominee program, will make it even easier for our international Ph.D. graduates who have received their Ph.D. from an Ontario university to obtain their permanent residency status and remain in Ontario. These graduates will no longer need an offer of employment to apply to the program, to be fast-tracked for permanent residency.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Minister, recent changes to Ontario's opportunities program will certainly be welcome news to the international students I represent in Toronto Centre.

Until these recent changes, I understand that Ontario employers searching for highly skilled professionals would first have to recruit an internationally educated professional and then the employer would have to nominate the individual for permanent residency, a very complicated process. Now that the government has changed the nominee program to actively retain Ontario-educated Ph.D. graduates, the nominee process will have to be adjusted.

Minister, how can international Ph.D. students or graduates apply for permanent residency through the Ontario's opportunities program?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Again, thank you to the member for the question. I want to take the opportunity of also mentioning that I'm working very closely with my colleague the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities as we continue to attract more international students to this province, because there is a very high demand for Ph.D. graduates in a variety of fields here in Ontario.

Ontario-educated international Ph.D. students can submit their nominee application forms now directly to Opportunities Ontario for approval by visiting ontarioimmigration.ca. They can do this as soon they have met the requirements of the degree, even before the degree has been conferred. If approved by Opportunities Ontario, the Ph.D. student nominee would then submit their permanent residency application to Citizenship and Immigration Canada for review and final approval.

I'm proud of these changes that we've made to attract the best talent from around the world.

ABATTOIRS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Minister, last week during question period I pointed out that over 25% of the money that your

government announced to help small abattoirs was never spent. According to Better Farming, you said you didn't spend all the money because there weren't enough applications, not enough demand. But ministry staff said there were more than enough applications. In fact, they cut it off after 48 hours.

Small abattoirs in rural communities across Ontario are closing or being closed because they can't afford to meet your regulations. One of the suppliers of our local food is disappearing and it seems you have given up on them.

Minister, are you so out of touch with rural Ontario that you believe the needs of abattoirs have been met? Let me assure you, from all the people we've been hearing from it's clear that problem is not solved. Will you finally apologize to the small abattoirs and fulfill your commitment?

Hon. Carol Mitchell: I certainly thank you for the question, and it is a very important question. What I want to start with is that food safety is our first priority. We are the leader in food safety.

There was \$25 million in transition funding. What I said in the Ontario Farmer is that it was application-based and based upon demand, and we will always meet the demand of the applications.

So when we talk about our government and our commitment to food safety, let's talk about their commitment as a government to food safety. I'll tell you, they fired meat inspectors. When we look at the value chain and what is required within the value chain, food safety is the foundation that we build upon, and our farmers understand that. To get a lecture from that side of the House that we don't understand rural Ontario is a little too rich.

When I think about the hard work of our farmers and when they are on the land—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. *Interjections*.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'll gladly accept unanimous consent for a supplementary question.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Deborah Matthews: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to clarify the record. In response to the member, I said that there were 39 nurses hired at Orillia Soldiers' Memorial through the new nursing graduate guarantee. Speaker, 39 is the number in that member's riding; 18 of them at Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to correct the record. I should have said the current act has not been substantially revised since 1953.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There being no deferred votes and no further business, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ROSEMARY SMITH

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: One week ago today, I was pleased to attend the celebration to honour Rosemary Smith, who had been named 2009 Citizen of the Year for Kitchener-Waterloo for her outstanding contribution to our community.

Born and raised in Owen Sound, Rosemary grew up with a strong sense of community and a deep-seated desire to give back—and give back she has, as a volunteer by supporting many charitable and non-profit organizations, and by serving on boards, such as the chair of both the Greater Kitchener Waterloo and Cambridge chambers of commerce, Leadership Waterloo Region, and the YWCA board. A mentor, a coach, a connector and a teacher, Rosemary is genuinely interested in the well-being of others and has always given generously of her time and of herself.

Now, as CEO of the Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation, Rosemary is regarded as the heartbeat of our community and a brilliant community builder. She has led projects such as Waterloo region's Vital Signs and Random Act of Kindness Day.

Her ability to bring together for the common good all people in our community has resulted in many more dollars being invested in community initiatives.

Congratulations, Rosemary, for a life of giving back. You are truly an inspiration and a most deserving recipient of this prestigious award.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I stand in the House today to acknowledge the efforts of both the Thames Valley District School Board and the London Catholic District School Board for actively integrating parents into a conference held this past weekend on fighting bullying. The "From Rhetoric to Reality" conference dealt with bullying in the schools and representations of violence in the media.

As you know, Speaker, education is a priority of our government. Therefore, this conference was exceptionally important in educating participants and creating dialogue amongst teachers, trustees and parents on how to sustain a safe and equitable atmosphere for students at school.

Empowering parents with proper information and resources for dealing with bullying and violence in the media is a key step for enacting lasting change. It's also vitally important for demonstrating to students that something is being done to address bullying at school.

I stand here proudly supporting the efforts of these two school boards and, of course, the parents who actively participate in creating a safe and prosperous learning environment for students in my region.

PHARMACISTS

Mr. Toby Barrett: I draw attention to just another example of how this government's ill-conceived and reckless health care cuts will affect small-town Ontario—small towns like Port Rowan in my riding of Haldimand-Norfolk.

Many years ago, there was a woman in Port Rowan named Lynda Green. She was a prominent citizen and businesswoman in the community. Sadly, she was diagnosed with ALS when her children were still young and her disease progressed rapidly.

As she struggled with the debilitation of the disease, she would discuss with her pharmacist, Glen Coon, various methods to help her cope with daily activities. She also questioned how those without financial means would ever be able to afford some of these items. Lynda's wish was to establish access to home health care aids at a reasonable cost so that people would not be financially punished after formal government health care stopped.

Following her passing, Lynda's wish came true after friends and Mr. Coon gave life to the Lynda Green Foundation. Patients who need walkers, wheelchairs, a bath bench or personal bathroom aids can simply borrow these items from the pharmacy and then return them to the pharmacy once they finish with them. It's that simple, really.

These are, in my opinion, the good things that this government is threatening with its cuts to small-town drugstores.

FUNDRAISING

Mr. Jim Brownell: Rain, hail and a deep chill in the air couldn't slow down the Children's Treatment Centre's Bike-A-Thon Plus last Saturday morning, as participants turned out in droves at the annual fundraising event in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry. An estimated 1,400 people registered to raise funds and participate in the event to support the Children's Treatment Centre, which helps children who have suffered sexual abuse and lends support to their families. The total amount raised this year was approximately \$136,000, which means an average of almost \$1,000 raised by each participant. About \$7,000 of this year's total was raised by events held in Morrisburg, a new addition to the fundraiser in Dundas county.

The Bike-A-Thon Plus is the second-largest annual fundraiser for the Children's Treatment Centre. It's a funfilled day, with activities for all interests and age groups. You can walk, run, bike or take part in events such as the car rally, which my wife and I took part in, as well as trail rides, motorcycle rides or a Rock-A-Thon.

A new feature added in 2006 was a seniors' walk, a shorter walk created so that all supporters could participate. Two new features this year included a 20-minute CrossFit workout and a 100-kilometre cycling challenge.

I would like to congratulate and thank the event chair, Milton Ellis, the volunteer organizers, and all the people who braved the cold weather and rain to come out and support such an important cause. Events like these raise awareness around the issue of abuse, an issue which we must continue to fight against, especially when it affects the children of our communities.

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: Over the past two weeks, Premier McGuinty has finally conceded that consumers costs will go up as of July 1 as a result of the harmonized sales tax. In fact, consumers saw goods and services go up May 1 for things like tickets and travel costs that fall after the implementation date.

All the while, the Premier's disclaimer has been that, over time, the savings incurred by businesses will be passed on to consumers—except, it seems, for wine and liquor, through a business it controls: the LCBO. Tax rates for alcohol are due to drop to 8% from 12% effective July 1, but retail prices will actually go up. That's because the province has actually instructed the LCBO not to lower prices, which means that, despite the reduction in the tax rate, the LCBO will increase its markup by 7.5%. The result is an overall increase in the price to consumers of domestic and imported wines.

Steve Erwin, a senior communications consultant for the LCBO, says that if prices were based just on the lower tax rates, then in fact prices of products would fall. But the ordered markup will have the effect of raising prices. An industry source states that the markup is "not about social responsibility, it's all about revenue."

So the savings that the Premier claimed will be passed on to consumers by business will not be. It's just another in a long line of unkept promises—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

HOPEWELL AVENUE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: It is a pleasure today to rise and congratulate Hopewell Avenue Public School on their 100th anniversary. Hopewell Avenue Public School is nestled in the Old Ottawa South and Glebe community in my riding of Ottawa Centre. Named after the former mayor of Ottawa, Charles Hopewell, the school has been a cornerstone of the education system in Ottawa since 1910.

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This month, they will be kicking off their anniversary celebration on May 17 with special guests, alumni, parents and staff at a commemorative opening ceremony. For the rest of the week, there will be festivities at the school, including such events as a wine and cheese, tours of the school, a celebration of music from the past 100 years, and the singing of the 100-year song, followed by lots of cake.

I want to thank Principal Nicole Turpin, Vice-Principals Kim MacDonald and Donna Boyle, as well as all the staff and teachers at Hopewell for making the 100th anniversary celebration very special for the kids

and the community. Hopewell Avenue Public School is an important hub of my community, and I wish them the best for the next 100 years of teaching our young people in Ottawa.

HOME CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today I would like to take this opportunity to revisit the issue of home care in Ontario. Home care is an essential service for the frail and elderly residents who want to continue to live in their own homes as they age, safely and with dignity, and who want to stay out of hospitals and long-term-care homes for as long as possible.

Our home care system is made up of grossly underpaid and extremely hard-working men and women who are dedicated to helping those in need. They often have to travel long distances between clients and have to work all sorts of shifts spread out over the course of any given day. With the home care system we have right now, they are not good jobs. They are poorly paid and the benefits are non-existent.

Just this week in the Globe and Mail there was a story of an elderly woman who had had to wait for hours in an overcrowded emergency room surrounded by other sick, elderly patients, only to be admitted 15 hours later but with no bed available for her. This happens far too often. Why does this happen? Because our home care system is broken; because we don't provide the care and support that the elderly and frail people of Ontario need to live in their homes with dignity.

This is unacceptable to me, and it is largely the result-

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Dave Levac: I rise in the House today to deliver more good news about the Ontario economy. Ontario saw an increase of 40,500 net new jobs in April, the fourth consecutive monthly gain and the strongest month in over two years. Ontario employment has increased by 142,500 net new jobs from a low in May 2009, and by 382,500 net new jobs since October 2003.

However, as we all know as members here, it's always devastating to lose a job. Our new five-year Open Ontario plan is about opening up our province to new economic opportunities that will result in new jobs and growth. Our plan will prepare Ontario to compete with the global economy that's emerging from the last recession. The world has changed.

We are also investing \$34 billion over the next two years to stimulate economic growth and help Ontario families. That includes \$32.5 billion for infrastructure. This investment is estimated to create and protect more than 300,000 jobs in the province over the next two years.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, "If not for the recent increases in infrastructure spending, Ontario's economy would have lost an additional 70,000 jobs in 2009." That's great news, and it has been helpful in the riding of Brant. I know there have been projects in my riding that have created jobs and have also sustained jobs.

The best way to overcome the challenges in this global recession that everyone knows we have all gone through is by building a powerful economy in Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

NURSES

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to stand in the House today in support of Ontario nurses, especially as this week is National Nursing Week. I'm looking forward to participating in RNAO's Take Your MPP to Work Day tomorrow—I'm off to visit the Guelph family health team.

Nurses play a key role in delivering health care and are now using more of their skills to take on diverse roles within the system, benefiting all Ontarians. Since 2003, the government has created more than 10,000 nursing positions and exceeded its goal of 900 nursing positions in 2009-10. Today, many nurses have received specialized training that allows them to provide a broader range of health services.

Earlier this week, the Minister of Health highlighted the registered nurse surgical first assist program in hospitals. Originally a pilot program, these nurses work with the surgeon and the rest of the operating room team to ensure patient safety before, during and after surgery.

In addition, the nursing graduate guarantee program ensures that every Ontario nursing graduate has the opportunity to work full-time in Ontario. There have been over 8,000 placements under this program. This supports the government's five-year Open Ontario plan to provide more access to health care services while improving quality and accountability for patients.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ENDING PUBLIC FUNDING
OF ELECTROCONVULSIVE
THERAPY ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 METTANT FIN
AU FINANCEMENT PUBLIC

DE LA THÉRAPIE ÉLECTROCONVULSIVE

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 67, An Act to end public funding of electroconvulsive therapy / Projet de loi 67, Loi mettant fin au financement public de la thérapie électroconvulsive.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The Health Insurance Act clearly defines that insured services are prescribed by regulation. This bill amends section 11.2 of the act to provide that electroconvulsive therapy is not an insured service, despite the regulations.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

HEALTH PROMOTION PROMOTION DE LA SANTÉ

Hon. Margarett R. Best: Last week, I had the opportunity to participate in the 3rd International Congress on Physical Activity and Public Health. The Ministry of Health Promotion was pleased to sponsor an event that brought together delegates from approximately 55 countries: experts in the fields of physical activity, public health and health promotion. Scientists from around the world spoke at the congress on topics including challenges to promoting physical activity among children, the importance of creating physically active and friendly communities, and the power of collaboration in preventing disease and promoting good health.

The Ministry of Health Promotion recognizes the numerous benefits of physical activity. Active living enhances quality of life, promotes a greater sense of wellbeing and builds stronger communities. At a time when 40% of our provincial budget is spent on health care, and a significant portion of that is spent treating preventable illnesses, we have a combined responsibility to take steps to address this critical issue.

As stated in the Heart and Stroke Foundation's A Perfect Storm report, half of our population between the ages of 20 and 64 is overweight or obese, and half of us are not getting enough exercise to maintain our good health. According to data from the World Health Organization, physical inactivity is the fourth-leading risk factor for non-communicable chronic disease worldwide, and causes more than two million preventable deaths every year.

These alarming statistics are precisely the reason why the Ministry of Health Promotion is working diligently to establish a network of partnerships to collaborate in creating a culture of health and well-being in the province of Ontario. Working with our partners, my ministry continues to explore the factors that affect the health of people and communities.

We value the information generated and shared at the congress, and it will inform and assist us as we develop new initiatives to assist Ontarians in leading healthier, more active lives.

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A major outcome of the congress was the ratification of the Toronto Charter for Physical Activity. The charter

is a call for action and advocacy to increase physical activity worldwide. The reasons are clear. As the opening lines of the charter explain, physical activity promotes well-being, physical and mental health; prevents disease; improves social connectedness and quality of life; provides economic benefits; and contributes to environmental sustainability. Jurisdictions around the world are called on to use the guiding principles and the framework for action as a guide in developing strategies for increasing physical activity. The solid information that forms the foundation of the charter will strengthen those efforts.

I am confident that the Toronto charter will have the same powerful impact the Ottawa charter had following the World Health Organization conference in 1986. Almost 25 years ago in Ottawa, the World Health Organization and its partners established five action areas for health promotion. These principles guided and informed the goals and missions of governments, non-governmental organizations and many other bodies in jurisdictions around the world, including the Ministry of Health Promotion, as we developed strategies and programs for health promotion.

Together we can influence the behaviour of individuals and groups to make informed decisions toward healthier, more active living. That goes for everyone in this chamber. We all have a role to play in this.

In closing, I want to extend my thanks to the organizers of the congress and the authors of the charter for their efforts in further advancing the health promotion agenda in promoting health and quality of life through physical activity.

I want to remind everyone today that your health is your wealth. It is the most important asset you have. Take care of it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I want to respond to the statement that has just been made by the Minister of Health Promotion.

I agree with what she said. I think it was a very important congress that we just had, this third International Congress on Physical Activity and Public Health. I think it is certainly significant that people from around the world had this very rare opportunity to assemble and collectively examine the critical need to further advocate for physical activity and healthy lifestyles.

When we say there is a need for physical activity and healthy lifestyles, these are not mere words. In fact, I would say to you that we're almost at a crisis point, when we take a look at the lack of activity we're seeing amongst our young people today and the consequences that is going to have upon their quality of life as they get older: not just obesity, which is very, very serious right now, but also, of course, cardiac disease and all other sorts of diseases that are certainly going to impact their life.

So this congress is important. They came together and were looking to make a change and improve health outcomes for everyone.

I'm pleased today to speak on behalf of our caucus. I do so in particular because I am a former physical education secondary school teacher. I want to thank the people who came together, the International Society for Physical Activity and Health. When I was Minister of Health, part of the focus that I had was to shift away from illness and focus on wellness and health promotion. We introduced initiatives such as Healthy Babies, Healthy Children. We certainly took a look at doing everything that we could—cardiac wellness; we had programs there.

We have to constantly strive for solutions to the current problems of obesity and sedentary lifestyles, and that is what the congress attempted to do.

The minister made reference to the fact that the conference was in Toronto this year, and it was unique in that they presented and ratified what is now known globally as the Toronto Charter for Physical Activity. I think they spent over a year working on this international standard for the promotion and improvement of physical activity throughout the world. There was extensive consultation. At least 53 countries were involved in this collaborative effort to determine and reach consensus on how we globally increase rates of physical activity.

Yesterday, I participated in a forum on global health, and I am concerned to learn that as a result of urbanization in our developed world, we are seeing less and less physical activity and, as a result, many of the diseases that these countries never had before are now developing and becoming quite widespread. So, this was an important meeting.

Hopefully, this Toronto charter will now be a very effective and influential tool for health advocacy. We have to influence the decision-makers. I hope this government does put in place and recognize the need for healthy, active lifestyles.

As I say, I'm concerned about the levels of obesity, particularly in our young children. I don't think there is time to waste, because we're facing an epidemic. Our children simply don't have the level of physical activity or exercise that we had even five or 10, and certainly not 20, years ago. Again, if you don't have activity, we're going to see higher rates of cardiac disease—we're already seeing them—diabetes and countless other detrimental health effects.

It's encouraging to know that these health professionals, these health advocates, came together, and that they're trying to do what they can globally to raise awareness and develop policy to ensure a healthier future for people throughout the world.

Certainly, I want to congratulate all the participants. I think the minister acknowledged that it was a successful congress. Let's all move together to make sure we lead more active lives.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm pleased to speak today on the third annual health and physical activity conference and the ratification of the Toronto Charter for Physical Activity. This conference, which took place a couple of weeks ago, is a clear example of the importance of physical activity in maintaining a healthy society. Physical inactivity is a huge individual and societal problem. Physical inactivity has been directly linked to obesity and many diseases including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and some cancers, to name a few, and contributes to over two million preventable deaths annually.

The Ontario government spends about \$42 billion each year treating people who are already sick, but we spend very little on keeping people healthy. Health promotion is not high-tech, and it doesn't grab headlines, but a properly coordinated health promotion ministry could save us billions down the road.

Physical activity is a key pillar of the health promotion puzzle. Physical activity is essential in fighting sedentary behaviour and chronic disease. There are many simple ways that the government can support physical activity. One easy way is to create more biking paths and walking trails throughout the province. If you build it, they will come.

Another way is to ensure that sidewalks are built into all new residential areas. It just boggles the mind to see all the new residential areas right now that are built without sidewalks. How can that be? It is because you assume that every one of those residents will hop into the minivan to drive to the soccer field.

What's wrong with this picture? If you have sidewalks, mom and dad will take the baby for a stroll in the stroller. Older people won't walk on the shoulder of the street, but they will go for a stroll if there is a sidewalk. To this day in Ontario, new residential areas are being built without sidewalks.

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Another important area that we could do is to increase physical activity in our schools. Research shows that when we do not encourage children to engage in physical activities at a young age, they are much more likely to withdraw from sports and other activities and rely on unhealthy choices during their leisure time. Children need our support in order to live a healthy life into their teenage years and beyond.

I hope that this conference was able to shed light on the importance of physical activity not only to Ontarians but to the Ministry of Health Promotion, which continues to let way too many opportunities to promote health and take action go right by. The Ministry of Health Promotion should be the champion for ensuring that the infrastructure for exercise is promoted, from urban design to school curriculum. The Ministry of Health Promotion should make sure that we have a social-determinants-of-health lens on every policy and decision that is made by this government to identify the opportunities up front and to make sure that we capitalize whenever there is an opportunity for physical activities. Do it up front.

I want to let you know that I wear a pedometer. It was given to me as a gift. I'm at 2,983 steps today. I do not go to bed before I reach 5,000 steps every day.

Interjections.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Some of the members exercise in the same places I do, so they know that I don't go to

bed till I've reached my 5,000 steps. I encourage each and every one of you to do the same. We have a role to play in this, but so does the Ministry of Health Promotion.

La troisième Conférence internationale sur l'activité physique et la santé publique a attiré des délégués venus de quelque 55 pays, spécialistes dans le domaine de l'activité physique, de la santé publique et de la promotion de la santé, et ils ont participé à la ratification de la Charte de Toronto pour l'activité physique.

J'espère que ceci servira de tremplin pour un nouveau tournant pour la ministre de la Promotion de la santé, qui verra l'activité physique comme une importante plateforme pour la promotion de la santé en Ontario.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

"Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1-billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends:

"—increase wait times and lineups for patients;

"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery; and

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I have affixed my signature to the petition as well.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury, and it reads:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning ... a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients" under certain conditions; and

Whereas since October 2009, "insured PET scans [are] performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine"; They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature, and send it to the Clerk with Jacob.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Ernié Hardeman: I have a petition here that was sent to me by Rebecca Gingrich, one of my constituents in Oxford county. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacies now."

Thank you very much for allowing me to present that on Rebecca's behalf.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury and Nickel Belt.

"Whereas a company's resumption of production with replacement workers during a legal strike puts undue tensions and divisions on a community; and

"Whereas anti-replacement legislation in other provinces has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of replacement workers during a strike."

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to the Clerk with page Vrajesh.

NIAGARA DISTRICT SECONDARY SCHOOL

Mr. Kim Craitor: I'm pleased to introduce this petition on behalf of the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake, deserve and have the right to request that the local school board provide programming and facilities to make the community's only secondary school viable and thriving;

"Whereas the only local secondary school is an important community hub and a critical component of the strategic planning for the future of Niagara-on-the-Lake;

"Whereas Niagara-on-the-Lake's economy, agriculture, tourism and service industries depend on the community's young people attending school here, working after classes and returning after their post-secondary education, the school board's plan to close the school will have major negative impacts on the town's economic future and development;

"Whereas the accommodation review committee recommended keeping the school open;

"Whereas there are over 700 high school students living in Niagara-on-the-Lake, which is more than enough to maintain a viable high school, and an independent review of population trends confirms Niagara-on-the-Lake is a growing municipality with sufficient future enrolment to sustain a high school;

"Whereas the municipality, individuals and community groups have provided a number of significant programming proposals and money to ensure the school continues to operate:

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request that the Minister of Education work together with the district school board of Niagara and the community and municipality to ensure Niagara District Secondary School continues to operate and is provided with the programming, resources and facilities necessary to make it viable and thriving."

I support it.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care:

"Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1-billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends,

"-increase wait times and lineups for patients,

"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery,

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I agree with the petition and I will sign it.

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here signed by a great number of constituents in Oxford county.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas residents of Oxford do not want Dalton McGuinty's new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and "Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$500,000; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families, farmers and low-income Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario families."

I affix my signature as I still agree with this petition, even though it has been going around for some time.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Pat Hoy: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontarians pay more for popular generic drugs for diabetes, high blood pressure and other common health issues than patients in other jurisdictions; and

"Whereas Ontarians deserve fair prescription drug prices so that families and seniors are not charged more than those in other countries; and

"Whereas some members of the opposition have sided with large corporations to preserve the status quo rather than make prescription medications more affordable for Ontario patients by supporting the proposed drug reforms:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians by passing the government's legislation to lower the cost of prescription medications."

I send this to the Clerk.

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WATER OUALITY

Mr. Jeff Leal: I have a petition today from Mike Ferguson from the great community of Wallaceburg, Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we never want to see another tragedy like Walkerton ever again. The health and safety of Ontarians can never come second to profit and greed. Clean, safe drinking water is a right all Ontarians should be able to enjoy.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to upgrade our current water filtration system;

"To continue to monitor and test our water systems;

"To continue to strengthen Ontario's trust in the safety of our drinking water:

"To continue to invest in new systems and personnel to monitor and test our water:

"To never forget the mistakes of the past and always hold our water supply to the highest standard;

"To continue to invest in the health and safety of Ontarians through our water supply."

I agree with this petition and give it to Tristen.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS FOR EMPLOYEES AND SELF-EMPLOYED PERSONS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LES RÉGIMES D'ÉPARGNE-RETRAITE DES EMPLOYÉS ET DES TRAVAILLEURS INDÉPENDANTS

Mr. Leal moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 54, An Act respecting retirement savings plans for employees and for self-employed persons / Projet de loi 54, Loi traitant des régimes d'épargne-retraite des employés et des travailleurs indépendants.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I'm pleased today to have the opportunity to debate Bill 54, An Act respecting retirement savings plans for employees and for self-employed persons.

The issue of pensions has become a topic for both a provincial and national debate. The Melbourne Mercer Global Pension Index indicated that Canada's retirement system ranks among the best in the world. The index concluded that Australia, the Netherlands and Sweden have higher ranks than Canada.

But despite this very credible ranking, there's a concern that the current retirement savings system is not adequate and many Ontarians are approaching retirement with uncertainty. The first big group of the baby boom generation will retire this year. The proportion of seniors in Canada is expected to nearly double in the next 20 years, from 13% to 23%.

This situation creates two challenges: (1) new pressures on the social safety network; and (2) the increase of the dependence ratio—the number of non-workers supported by active workers—pushing up against the availability of public resources.

The international financial crisis which started in the United States has placed a spotlight on Canadians' and Ontarians' savings rates. In 1980, 20% of disposable income was placed in savings. Today, that is 5%. We need, as a society, to focus on the need to increase our savings rate.

In order to create an environment for savings, we must start with our youngest citizens. My colleague from Kitchener-Conestoga is searching for ways to introduce a new curriculum to teach financial literacy in Ontario schools. According to the member from Kitchener-Conestoga, "Ontario students today are Ontario's future consumers and investors. We have to change habits and nurture, I guess, a culture of responsibility.

"This is about giving them the knowledge and planting the seeds so this is a future foundation for behaviour."

Saving for retirement cannot start too soon.

Ontario's retirement savings system is built on a number of elements. They are commonly known as the three pillars.

Pillar 1: The first pillar consists of public pensions granted to all our citizens. Old age security is provided at age 65 for retirees who have 40 years of residence in Canada after age 18. For those with fewer years of residence, the pension is pro-rated. For low-income seniors, there's also the guaranteed income supplement. These inflation-indexed pensions are financed out of general government revenue.

Pillar 2: CPP/QPP. The second pillar acts like a defined benefit plan and is financed by mandatory contributions, split between employees and employers, of 9.9% of covered earnings. When CPP/QPP was introduced in the mid-1960s, it was intended to replace up to 25% of wages to the national median income of some \$47,000. The OAS/GIS and the CPP/QPP together replace 75% of employment income for someone making \$20,000, and 41% for someone making \$40,000. As employment income rises above these levels, the replacement income ratio falls, so that a \$100,000 earner would see OAS and CPP/QPP covering only 17% of preretirement earnings.

Pillar 3: registered pension plans and registered retirement savings plans. The third pillar is meant to provide a level of income adequacy that goes beyond the bare basics. It relies on private sector savings and consists of two elements: workplace retirement plans including registered pension plans, or RPPs, as well as group RRSPs. The proportion of workers covered by RPPs, which include defined benefit and defined contribution plans, is declining. It is currently estimated at 39%, down from 46% in the late 1970s.

Five million Canadians are covered by workplace defined benefit pension plans, which are designed to provide a deferred lifetime income. The majority of these plans are in the public sector. About 1.3 million Canadians are covered by workplace defined contribution plans where retirement income will be based on accumulated savings at the point of retirement, and another two million Canadians are covered by workplace group RRSPs, which are not necessarily locked in for retirement.

Individual Canadians contribute more than \$34 billion a year to RRSPs through individual plans established with the ongoing assistance and support of advisers. However, they've only used 6% of the contribution sums

they have built since 1991. This information was provided by a study conducted by Mr. Bob Baldwin in 2009: Research Study on the Canadian Retirement Income System.

Australia developed a universal deferred contribution plan where employees contribute 9% of their income to privately run superannuation funds. Participation is mandatory for all employees between 18 and 70. The Australian plan does not contain an opt-out provision.

In a recent discussion paper, the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association Inc. recommended the following five measures to improve access to retirement plans by Canadian workers:

- (1) Amend tax and pension legislation to permit the adaptation of direct contribution multi-employer pension plans/deferred contribution multi-employer pension plans.
- (2) Require every workplace with 20 or more workers to provide a retirement plan either on its own or through a defined contribution multi-employer pension plan. Employers should be left the option of whether to contribute to the plan. It is my personal view that it would be in the best interests of the employer to make matching contributions.
- (3) Amend tax and pension legislation to enable autoenrolment in workplace retirement plans.
- (4) Amend pension and employment standards legislation to prevent the impediment of auto-escalation in workplace retirement plans.
- (5) Amend tax legislation to ensure that employer contributions to group RRSPs are retained for retirement purposes through locking in.

I'd like to spend some time outlining the merits of defined contribution multi-employer pension plans. This type of plan would expand access and foster regular contributions to retirement savings plans for private sector workers.

Plans would be sponsored and administered by a regulated financial institution, relieving participating employers of almost all the administrative costs and compliance burdens. For example, you could select the investment and savings options, performing due diligence on the investment/savings provided and selecting trustees associated with offering a pension plan.

By having regulated financial institutions take on the role of plan sponsor, plans would be made accessible to the self-employed.

By having individual pension plans applicable to multiple workplaces, administrative and compliance costs would be reduced, allowing plans to achieve economies that are currently realized by only the largest pension plans. The fact that a critical mass of pension funds can be achieved through a deferred contribution multiemployer pension plan significantly improves returns and reduces leakages in administrative fees.

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Bill 54 also includes a provision for auto-enrolment. Auto-enrolment means that workers would automatically be enrolled in the pension plan offered by their employers unless they specifically opted out. Recent data from the United States, which pursues the creation of auto-enrolment rules: 66% of workers participated in a deferred contribution plan; with auto-enrolment, participation rates rose to 87%.

Some have suggested that an auto-escalation feature could also be incorporated on top of the auto-enrolment plan. With auto-enrolment escalation, a plan could start members out at a base contribution rate as low as 3% of pay, automatically escalating it 1% in each successive year until it reached a fixed rate of 6% of pay. This provision would also increase the savings rate.

In proposing Bill 54, it is my intent to add some additional ideas to what I believe should be a province-wide and, indeed, national debate on pension reform. Every Ontarian has a big stake in this debate, and every member of the Ontario Legislature needs to be part of the discussion.

I do not believe that a strictly public sector approach or a strictly private sector approach provides the answer. We are fortunate that we have great strengths in both the public and private sectors. The time is right to forge a new consensus on Ontario pensions.

I close with some wise words of former Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson: "Failures are made only by those who fail to dare, not by those who dare to fail."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak to the member from Peterborough's private member's bill, Bill 54, An Act respecting retirement savings plans for employees and for self-employed persons. I think it's clear that retirement saving is a concern across the country. It's certainly is a concern here in Ontario, so I'm pleased the member has brought this private member's bill forward.

The issue of coverage, that being how many people have a plan, is significant. The fact of the matter is, in Ontario and in the country, not enough people are saving for retirement and not enough people have plans. So anything that we can do to increase the coverage and provide more opportunity for people to participate in a plan is a positive thing, so I will be supporting this private member's bill.

The fact is that, currently, 65% of Ontarians do not have any form of registered pension plan, and 50% of Canadian taxpayers have no private savings at all. So we need to provide some means for people to be able to save, and this bill does provide some form of increased coverage.

I note that the experts in the field, such as the Association of Canadian Pension Management, when they talk about what we should be focusing on, say that we need to rebalance the debate to focus on retirement income, and that we need to encourage formation of more workplace plans and savings plans for Canadians, which is critical to the retirement income debate. So that's what this bill, in a small way, is doing.

The bill would require employers with 20 or more employees in Ontario to provide retirement savings plans

for employees. It would be a plan that would be a defined contribution multi-employer plan. So even though it would be required of employers of 20 or more—and the member can correct me in the few minutes he has left; he can just nod his head if I'm right—as I understand it, even a sole proprietor or a very small business could participate in this plan, which might be for themselves, in that case. I think that's positive.

I did have one concern about whether it would be a burden on businesses that couldn't afford to do it but might want to offer the plan. As I understand, an employer is not required to contribute towards the plan, but they may if, in designing the plan, they so desire to. I see the member nodding, so I think I'm correct on that.

I think we do need to do what we can to provide opportunities for people to save for retirement.

Another feature of the plan that I do like is that it has an auto-enrol feature, so that if your employer is 20 or more and he has set up a plan, you as an employee are automatically signed up for the plan, but you have the right to opt out of it if you so desire. I think it's just human nature that we all have something else we would rather spend our immediate cash on versus saving for a time that might be 20 or 30 years away, which is retirement. We can always think about something like the new car or a vacation or whatever on which we'll spend the cash at hand, when really, if we're doing what's best for the future, we should be putting a bit of money aside over the long term to be able to provide for our retirement. So I do like that auto-enrol feature of this private member's bill.

I have to say, and it's not concerned exactly with this private member's bill, that on this issue of retirement savings, I am concerned about the fact that in the province of Ontario, starting July 1, the HST, the 8% additional tax, will be applied to the management fee on mutual funds. I'm concerned about that because those people who rely on RRSPs currently can only put up to 18% of their income into an RRSP, as compared to the other side of the retirement savings picture, which is someone who has a defined benefit plan. The value of that plan, for those lucky enough to have it, is about 35% of pay. There's a big inequity there at this point, and by putting a tax on the management fees on RRSPs, it makes people less able to save and further compounds the problem of people having enough money for their retirement income.

Another question I did have, which maybe the member, in his few minutes at the end of this, would be able to respond to, is the issue of portability. Say I'm an employee and I sign up with my company, which has 25 employees. His private member's bill gets passed. My company sets up the plan, the defined contribution multiemployer plan, and I work there for 10 or 15 years, and then I move out of the province. Maybe he could explain to me what happens then. I assume—and you can correct me again if I'm right or wrong—that I have a set amount after the 10 or 15 years in an account that I would be able to take with me when I move to BC because I lost my job in Ontario—

Mr. Dave Levac: No, no. Don't do that. Stay.

Mr. Norm Miller: Just kidding there; sorry. But seriously, the issue of portability is one I did have.

I note that I've pretty much used all the time I have, but I'm pleased to see this private member's bill coming forward. I look forward to a response to the couple of questions I had.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Dave Levac: The NDP doesn't want to talk?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I don't know.

Mr. Michael Prue: We're letting you talk.

Mr. Dave Levac: No, no. Go ahead.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate before it collapses?

The honourable member for Brant.

Mr. Dave Levac: If it hadn't been for the member for Peterborough, I would have played chicken with the member from Beaches-East York—

Interjection.

Mr. Dave Levac: I would have won, because we would have got the bill.

But anyway just a couple of minutes to thank the member from Peterborough. He has done outstanding work on this area for a long time, even before he was elected. I want to compliment him for the work that he does in having us understand the issue.

I do support the bill. I do want to say, though, that I think all kinds of ideas are necessary to engage in this debate. The biggest part of this is that I hope that this, along with anyone else's private member's bills, and including the previous motion that the NDP put forward, allows us to enter into a larger national debate. I don't know if there's anybody in this place who does not understand, recognize and probably support that, as a nation, we should be evaluating this whole process and, of course, what kind of impacts that would have in the province of Ontario.

I want to say at the outset that one of the things I liked about the bill was that it wasn't public versus private; it was public and private. So the opportunities for us to enter into the debate are: Is there a public entity that can be participating in this pension discussion? Yes. Is there a private opportunity for us to enter into the debate? Yes. I think it's a combination of both, providing us with the opportunity in terms of investment.

What's unfortunate about this is that employers are now going to be relegated—if we don't open this debate, we would be simply saying that the only solution we can come up with at a national/provincial level would be public. I don't know that that's true. So I would suggest that that's what this bill is doing: It's allowing us the option to flow in a combination of, and in partnership with, public and private opportunities.

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The other thing is that I want to thank the member from Kitchener-Conestoga, along with something that's

already happening, for her work in education. I think we need to make sure we change the culture of who we are as Canadians, because the statistics of how poorly we do in this field are there. There is a committee that's taking place right now, through the Ministry of Education, looking at the curriculum and where we want to move from there. That in itself is going to help us change that culture. I think there are several ways in which we can continue to do this operationally to move the cultural discussion into one that sees us becoming better at pensions for people.

I want to compliment him on the part where he spoke about auto-enrolment. We've seen evidence—you move from 66% participation to around 83% or 85% participation—that tells us that's a helpful stick inside the debate on changing the culture. I thank the member for it. One of the things I want to point out too, when we talk about education and auto-enrolment, is how young people are when they participate in this at the onset. If I'm coming out of university or college or high school, I'm walking into my first job and have no knowledge about how I want to save for the future. If we have auto-enrolment and higher education of those students, we will see an increase and a change in that culture.

All in all, I want to compliment the member from Peterborough. He has my support. I think everyone here should be putting this on the table for us to continue the debate, and I will be supporting the member from Peterborough.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I very much appreciate being able to speak today to Bill 54, An Act respecting retirement savings plans for employees and for self-employed persons, and I appreciate the fact that the member has brought this bill forward. I can tell you that as far as we're concerned, this is a good stepping stone. As I mentioned to the member—he said that it opens up a discussion—I think it's important that that discussion take place, primarily because people now are more and more aware of why they need to have some kind of plan in place.

The reality is that if you want to have a decent standard of living, you can't get along with \$50,000 in a bank account when you retire if you don't have some kind of pension plan. You actually have to have those investments, whether they are in the form of an RRSP or any kind of investment, if you want any kind of income, after you've worked to the age of 60 or 65 and happen to live to be 80 or 85 years of age; that you can live with a decent income and not be at poverty level, in some cases.

I like the fact that it's optional for both the company and the employee. They can opt out if they have to, and the company can be limited to what they put in—that's my understanding. But at least they've set the plan up, and in a lot of cases they can actually bring in professionals: people who can come in and speak to the employees about why they have to have X dollars set aside as they grow older.

I myself have been in a couple of small businesses like that, and in fact we ended up putting some kind of plan in place for both of them so that people could at least move in a forward direction so that they could have some type of income.

I think that what draws it to attention now is that most people in the public service have excellent pensions. Whether they are firefighters, police officers or are with an OMERS group, they have a decent income at the end of their working days and can live a fairly decent lifestyle with that. But there are many other people who don't have that and really haven't been educated in a proper way on how to invest properly and to make sure they start putting money away at a very early age. You can't wait until you're 50 or 55 years of age and think you're going to have enough money put away to retire, if you have a normal-income kind of job. You have to start putting it away from your 20s and 30s, so that you have a decent type of income.

I think it's a step in the right direction, and I applaud the member for doing it. In a lot of cases, we have some really positive private members' bills taking place in this House, and they get shuffled away with prorogation of the House or whatever. But in the end, as the member said to me, they are a point where you open up a discussion for the future. Maybe it will go nowhere, but maybe it will end up having an impact on some companies, on some of the people in the public service. We can move this forward in a fairly positive direction.

We've said it a few times in the House that if you want to have a normal kind of income, something with which you can sustain a decent lifestyle, not only living on the Canada pension plan, I can tell you that you're going to have to do better than just having a few bucks set aside in the bank. You're going to have to have a plan where you can count on a monthly income. People in their 60s and early 70s like to do a lot of travelling. You want to make sure you have money set aside for that. You might have to replace cars once in a while, and there will be maintenance on your home, that sort of thing. I think it's important that, as we move into the future generations, we make sure that we're setting the groundwork so that they can take some positive steps in that manner.

I'll be supporting the bill, and I hope it moves forward. I hope it gets to committee and we can actually debate it further and get some more professional-type people in to explain why this bill makes sense. I think you'll find that this would be fairly widely accepted by the business community as well as by individual citizens across the province as they look forward to retirement.

I don't think it's something that will save a lot of pension plans around here for our generation. I think it's the young people coming up who need to make sure that, no matter what age they are, they start setting a bit of money aside all the time and having these investments take place so that they can look down the road and retire with dignity and with some proper income as they grow a little older.

Again, I thank you, and I'll be supporting this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened to the member from Peterborough and I've listened to those who want to support this bill, and I cannot believe my ears. In the late 1990s, the government of Ontario—the Mike Harris government—did away with the pension plans of every single man and woman member in this House.

Mr. Dave Levac: Shame.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Shameful.

Mr. Michael Prue: Absolutely. The member here who spoke in favour of the bill just said, "Shame."

What is being proposed here is the selfsame plan that was imposed on all of us. What the member from Peterborough is proposing is a plan that he does not even accept for himself. I have heard from every single member of this Legislature, over the past nearly nine years that I have been here, that the single most ridiculous thing—and I'm even going to ask the Conservatives to comment on this—that the Mike Harris government did was to shelve the pension plan of MPPs and substitute for it a defined contribution plan.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: A private plan.

Mr. Michael Prue: It was a private plan. It doesn't work. I have been here, as I said, nine years. I went, and all of you went who wanted to go, to the same luncheon that we had this week. If you have \$100,000 invested in the plan at the end of the time you're here, which is more than most members will ever accumulate, you can hope for somewhere between \$700 and \$800 a month for 10 years.

Mr. Dave Levac: It's not a career.

Mr. Michael Prue: No. Okay, it's not a career.

Mr. Dave Levac: It's not a career.

Mr. Michael Prue: No, but this holds true for anybody out there. Even if you're at 30 years and you put in the kind of money as a percentage that we make, which is \$125,000—not many Ontarians do that—at the end of the period, you get a pittance. You get an absolute pittance.

Mr. Dave Levac: How about the 73% of people who get nothing?

Mr. Michael Prue: No, listen to this: 73% get nothing, yes, but you get a pittance.

The issue here isn't whether or not we have a defined contribution plan. Surely to God, the issue is whether or not Ontarians should have a defined benefit plan. I think that this is where the member is missing the whole thing.

Every single member in this House knows that what we have is not right. Every single member in this House knows that what Ontarians want is what we used to have. Every single member in this House should be advocating for a pension plan that pays a decent pension when you retire, not a pittance, which is the best you can do because you're walking in lockstep with the insurance industry. Only the insurance industry, under this plan, will be allowed to sponsor and administer the new multi-

employer plans, potentially resulting in billions of dollars in fees for that industry.

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I went to the plan the other day, for those who had the time to show up to it. There were only a few of us there, but we showed up. One of the questions they asked us was, "What was the difference if you went into this plan, and what kind of difference could a really good adviser make towards the plan?" I was naive. I guessed that an individual adviser who knew the stock market and everything else could increase the plan by 2% or 3% or 4% a year by making all the right investments. I got gonged, because that's the button I pushed. The reality was that if you have the best adviser in Canada, you might be able to gain 0.5%. Mr. Ramal was there; he remembers this.

Here's what it is: You're going to skim billions of dollars for 0.5%; that's the very best you're going to do. That's what Mr. Leal is asking us to accept, and I don't accept that. We do not believe that the way to provide the maximum opportunity for people's retirement in this province is to allow insurance companies and banks to skim off scads of administrative dollars and whittle away the savings of people so that they can make all kinds of profits on the backs of hard-working Canadians, hardworking Ontarians. You want to skim them off. Sure, they can make money. I'm sure the insurance companies and the banks will love this motion. They'll say, "We can do this for you. We can take your money. We can invest it. We can maybe make 0.5% if we're really good at it, in addition to what has been put in," but at the end, you're not going to get a whole lot.

We believe that this needs to be managed by the public sector. We believe that the CPP has shown us the way to do it. We believe that adding an extra \$600 or \$700 a month for 10 years for somebody who has served this Legislature is tantamount to not very much. And if that is based on an average salary in this place of \$125,000—about which, I think the papers are right—how many Ontarians are going to see that \$600 to \$700? How many are going to see it with this bill? I'm telling you, I don't think that this is the way we ought to be going. After years of putting your contributions in, you don't know what you're going to get, whereas, if you have a defined benefit plan, they can tell you, on the day you are about to retire, how much you can expect. I think that that's what we need to do.

Tommy Douglas said a long time ago—and he is revered across the country. I hear oftentimes that the Conservative and Liberal members will quote Tommy Douglas. One of his greatest sayings to me that I ever heard was, "Dream no small dreams." You can dream this dream, the member from Peterborough, but it's a small dream. It is a very small dream. Or you can dream the big dream: that everybody in this province who retires has a pension plan which is enough for them to live in dignity for the rest of their life. It is like the CPP plan: an addition to the CPP plan. The monies that are taken in are used for very small administrative purposes,

and the rest goes back into the plan. The rest goes back into making sure that people don't live in penury. After years of putting your contributions into the plan, you know exactly how much you are going to receive as your pension benefit when you retire. It provides the best retirement security.

This plan that's being proposed simply doesn't work. I know it works for the banks and the insurance companies; you all know it works for the banks and insurance companies. You all know, as MPPs, what is going to happen to us when and if we retire. It has been said around this place that the fact that so many people choose to stay on beyond 65 and 70 and 75 and into their 80s running in this place is because they don't have a pension, because they require the money that is here. They have no other means of looking after themselves, because what we have today is not sufficient.

I don't wish for others what I have to have for myself. I came from other places. I came from a municipal government where we had a defined benefit plan. I came from the federal government, where we had a defined benefit plan. When I came to this place, my wife was very angry at me. She called me a name which I cannot say in this House. She told me, in effect, that I was an idiot because I was 50-some years old when I left municipal government and I was coming to a place that had virtually no pension. I am still here because I have virtually no pension. I don't wish that upon other people. I think that all Ontarians deserve the right to have a full and complete pension.

Should the government members vote for this bill, it is a clear sign that this government wants banks and insurance companies to get even more of our hard-earned disposable income on high-risk retirement plans and that they don't want to set up a plan that all Ontarians would truly benefit from.

The member from Peterborough's bill suggests that it's only to skim the outrageous fees off the retirement income of even those earning the lowest wages. We think you need to put wage earners first. Please don't put the banks and the insurance companies first. Put the wage earners, put the people who are going to live in poverty and are afraid of what happens when they turn 60 or 65 or 70, first. You have a choice. We put forward a bill the other day, and it didn't pass. I don't think this bill is the answer.

This bill ought not to signal where this government is coming from. The members in the Liberal Party ought to say, "We don't want to go there either." Come up with your own plan. Come up with something better. Come up with something that gives people hope and an opportunity. You need to advocate on behalf of your constituents. It's not just to say you might be able to have a couple of hundred dollars in the end—because that's all most of them are going to get after 20 or 30 years. If they're only making \$30,000 or \$40,000 a year and if they're entitled to put in what they're entitled to put in, that's all they're going to end up with in this kind of plan. Please don't do that to them. Having \$200 extra a month

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is not where they need to be. They need to be in a place where they have sufficient money and are able to look after themselves. They need that decent amount of income. They need certainty about their financial security. They need a quality of life that they have, and ought to, become used to, that they're not going to get if you turn it over to the insurance companies and the type of plan that we have seen be so unsuccessful to all of us.

If contributors were paying the wholesale administrative costs offered by these large public pension funds, their fees would decline—this is from the actuaries—by some \$8.4 billion a year. Equivalently, their retirement savings would grow by an additional \$8.4 billion a year if it was public. You can give that money to the insurance companies, and if you pass Mr. Leal's bill, you will. Or you can make sure that \$8.4 billion goes where it's supposed to go: into the pockets of the retirees of Ontario. You've also got all the money that they skim off.

I think what I need to say in conclusion is that the evidence points away from where Mr. Leal wants to send us in this bill. We have an obligation. I know I have an obligation; I'm sure all of you feel the same one: to protect the people of this province, your constituents; to provide the very best that can you provide. If you think that providing the very best is to give them the type of plan that all of us in our heart of hearts reject, then vote for his bill. If you think we can do better, then I think we need to say we can do better and say no to Mr. Leal.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Just a reminder that we refer to each other by our riding names. Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm delighted to enter the debate. It's an important debate. I believe it has been around this place for many years. Since we got elected in 2003, people have been talking about it. Lately, our Premier has been talking to the federal government to introduce a national pension plan for all Ontarians and all Canadians. I think it's the best way to do it. Also, early this week the leader of the third party introduced a bill in that regard, and today the member from Peterborough brings to us a great, important bill to be debated in the House.

I would have to agree with all the elements, because I believe that government should run and control the pension plans for all Ontarians, especially when we talked about it this morning. We talked about how security commissions and regulators should be united and should be in one office for the country to maintain and watch all the financial companies, because they deal with the people's money. So many people have invested millions and billions of dollars. They're saving for their retirements, like us. When we checked our retirement plan, 15 months ago we found out most of our money was gone. So there was nothing for our pension when we bought RRSPs. I went on the assumption that we would have something for ourselves when we retire from this place, if we retire, and we could depend on it.

Therefore, I believe it's an important step towards opening the discussion. As the member from Simcoe

mentioned, it's a great dialogue, it's an important dialogue. As a private member's bill, it might not be a bill or a law we adopt in this place, but it's very important to talk about these issues for the sake of security for all the people of Ontario. I think we are obligated as citizens, as elected officials, as a people who have some kind of ability to make rules and regulations in this place to come up with a solution for the 70% of the total population who have no pensions whatsoever. They cannot depend on anything.

As I said on Tuesday when I spoke on opposition day, you know what? In the end, we, as a government, are paying anyway. We're paying for people, whether through Ontario Works, through disability, through family benefits or different sorts of supports. So why don't we organize the system from the beginning, when the people, the youth, are young, and they can contribute some money for when they're retired and they can depend on it.

Again, it's a very important debate, and I want to thank the member for bringing it to our attention. I'm looking forward to hearing more.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: It's my pleasure to join in the debate today. I thank the member from Peterborough for bringing Bill 54 forward. I was hoping to speak from several angles, but I don't have a lot of time. I'm not even sure how much time I have, but I did want to highlight a few important aspects.

There was a conference this week run by the Institute for Research on Public Policy. They're saying that the opinion remains divided among pension experts, economists and business representatives, although they are agreeing that most support the principle that no plan should put young workers or taxpayers at risk of having to bail out current or future retirees if investment returns fall short of expectations. So I thank the member from Peterborough for bringing this forward. I commend him for beginning this very important discussion.

I also wanted to highlight a special in the Globe and Mail. It was an article that highlighted some really shocking statistics, and I think it comes into play in this debate. One in three are struggling or can't keep up with their finances in Ontario, one in four are weak in the key areas of planning and budgeting, and 30% are not preparing for retirement. At the same time, personal debt relative to income has been climbing steadily for two decades. They're asking, how many of us resolve to spend less each month to pay down our debt and to contribute to our RRSPs yet never do so? They refer to a behavioural economy which shows the gap between intention and action.

I thank the member for Peterborough for highlighting the work that's being done with the working group on financial literacy that was commissioned by the Minister of Education. Minister Dombrowsky continues to support this initiative, because what we're doing is looking at exactly that: We're looking at a behaviour change. It's a whole philosophy shift in the way that we think about finances. Where does that begin? It begins with our youngest: our students.

How do we take this behaviour change? Just a quick story: When I went into an elementary school, I said to the students in grade 3, "Where does money come from?" All the hands went up, so I asked Alyssa, and Alyssa told me that money comes from grandma or grandpa or it comes from a birthday card. Fair enough; maybe it does. Then Kevin in the front row said, "Money comes from a bank." Yes, money does come from a bank, Kevin. So I said, "What do you do with that money when you get it?" Pretty much all the hands went up, and it was unanimous that when you get money, you put it in a jar.

What we need to do as a working group on financial literacy is look at that behaviour shift, that change in behaviour—that gap, really. It's a gap between knowledge and action.

We've been consulting around the world. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development out of Paris told us that Ontario is at the forefront of the world on this file. So it's so important that we continue to focus on behaviour change, and this is the discussion that the member from Peterborough has brought forward today.

I also thank the member from Brant for bringing forward the topic of the working group, because these symbiotic actions are going on at the same time. We have to be having the discussion of retirement and pension at the same time that we have to be looking at how we're teaching our youth in schools. It's bringing together those two actions that is important.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Jim Brownell: I just have a little over a minute. I'm pleased to stand today in support of Bill 54. Certainly the member from Peterborough gave all the aspects of this bill, so I won't talk on that, but I do want to say that a debate has started, a debate through the opposition, the debate that's here today with Bill 54 and certainly the good work that's being done.

I know the member from Kitchener-Conestoga and her interest in making sure that the education starts. When you have statistics that say that in 1980, 20% of disposable income was put into savings and now it's down to 5%, there has to be an education piece on that by schools by teaching the young folks what it is to save and how you can save.

Certainly what the member has given us here today is that opportunity in businesses employing 20 people or more, requiring them to have a retirement savings plan in place. That's where it has to start. This is a start of a debate.

The Premier and the Prime Minister have been talking about expanding opportunities for savings and pension plans. Let this be a start and let Bill 54 be a start here in the Ontario Legislature of us moving forward in making amendments and making the Employment Standards Act amendments

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Mr. Leal, the member for Peterborough, has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I'd like to thank the following members who participated in the debate today: Parry Sound–Muskoka, Beaches–East York, Simcoe North, my colleagues from Brant, Kitchener–Conestoga, London–Fanshawe and, of course, the hard-working member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

It's interesting when you do a little research on some of the big public pension plans in Ontario. I took a look at OMERS for a moment. Everybody thinks the returns from OMERS come from their investment in public sources. In fact, in 2003, OMERS changed their plan and adopted a new approach, a new asset-mixed policy with greater emphasis placed on private market investments, as it was believed that those markets would yield strong, predictable and consistent returns with reduced risk. Where did OMERS invest their money? The Royal Bank of Canada, Barrick Gold, Golf Town, Bruce Power, Square One Shopping Centre in Mississauga, along with Watermark Place in London, the United Kingdom.

At the same time, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan revised their base of investments: government of Canada bonds, Toronto Eaton Centre, Birmingham International Airport, Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment—I think that's a questionable investment—and Valentino Fashion Group. The Valentino Fashion Group is where the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan has invested their dollars to get a rate of return.

This is about the start of a debate. In an ideal world, we would set up a select committee here at Queen's Park to look at pensions in the province of Ontario, because I think we need a full debate. In today's edition of the Toronto Star, Jim Leech, who is acknowledged as one of the great experts in pensions, says it's time we had a great debate: "Our generation can be the pension champions who resolved the problem, or the chumps who squandered the retirement security of future generations"—the young people of Peterborough. He says we need a debate on both aspects: public pensions and also looking at the private sector to shore up pension plans in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. We'll vote on this ballot item in about 100 minutes.

1430

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Legislature of Ontario petition the Prime Minister of Canada and the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to amend their policy directive regarding third party access to the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) databases immediately to make it possible to screen potential employees, service providers and volunteers who are potentially in positions of trust and authority with vulnerable persons such as children and youth who are served by organizations such

as school boards or their agents (pursuant to regulation 521/01 of the Education Act, Ontario), health and social service agencies, municipalities and volunteer organizations, including the ability to determine in a timely manner if an individual has been pardoned for a conviction for a sexual offence.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mrs. Sandals moves private member's notice of motion number 31.

Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for her presentation.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'd like to mention a few people who will be joining us shortly. We're moving along quite quickly here this afternoon. But we will be joined by Bob Williams, who is the executive director of the Ontario Education Services Corp.; Gail Anderson, executive director, and Jeff Sprang, director of communications, from the Ontario Public School Boards' Association; Bill Byrd, the Safe and Caring Schools administrator from the Toronto District School Board; Alice Pitt, dean of the faculty of education at York University; and Genalyn Lo, representing the dean of the Michener Institute. Those folks are actually joining us as we speak.

When Ontario parents send their kids off to school or out to the hockey rink or to Girl Guides or dance class, they assume that the organization has done the proper checks and that their child will not be keeping company with a sex offender. Last November, that would have been a reasonable assumption. But late last fall, a federal policy directive stopped the existing process for many of those reference checks.

I'm going to indulge in a little bit of a history lesson here, because it sets the context.

Back during the time of the Conservative government, they appointed Mr. Justice Sydney Robins to do an inquiry into the sexual abuse of students by adults in schools, and Mr. Robins wrote a very extensive report, a very useful report. In response to that, the then-Minister of Education, Janet Ecker, tabled a piece of legislation which, if recall serves me, was supported by all three parties at the time. I think, in fact, the member from Simcoe North may have been the parliamentary assistant at the time. He's nodding his head.

This was also a very good piece of legislation. It dealt with, among other things, how school boards should manage if they do have allegations of sexual abuse against an employee. But it also laid out very specifically that school boards are required to do criminal reference checks for, number one, their employees, and, number two, service providers who have direct contact with students. Volunteers aren't mentioned, but obviously lots of school boards do also require criminal reference checks for their volunteers. I would also note that while this particular legislation applies to school boards, there's similar legislation in lots of other sectors that deals with vulnerable people with children and youth.

Now, I put this in this context because it's important to understand the rationale for requiring the criminal reference checks in the first place. The rationale was to make sure that you, insofar as you can do that with a criminal reference check, attempt to discover whether or not the prospective employee or service provider is in fact a sexual offender. You want to know what their past history of sexual offences is.

That raises a couple of issues. The first one is this whole issue around pardons, which has been in the press a lot lately. When you do a reference check, can you find out if the person has been pardoned?

I'd like to talk a little bit about what a vulnerable person is. Vulnerable persons are defined in section 6.3 of the Criminal Records Act:

"vulnerable persons' means persons who, because of their age, a disability or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent,

"(a) are in a position of dependence on others; or

"(b) are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by persons in a position of authority or trust relative to them."

Commonly accepted examples of vulnerable persons are children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities. There's no question that those people all fall into the vulnerable sector category.

Going on with this issue of pardons and sexual offences: If a pardon has been granted, the criminal history information about an individual convicted of a sexually based offence is retrievable by law enforcement only for the purposes of a vulnerable sector check. If we think back a month or so ago, there was a lot of discussion about Graham James in the media and it came to light just how routinely pardons were being granted for sexual offences. I certainly didn't realize that, even as somebody with a lot of experience in the education sector. So it makes it absolutely crucial that whoever is doing the check get to a vulnerable persons check. If you don't do that, you've actually sort of missed the purpose.

The other issue, at least with respect to school boards but I think a lot of other people as well, is: What is a service provider? We know who the direct employees are. What's a service provider?

Let's give some examples of people who might be service providers to school boards or other people.

The people who do breakfast programs at schools probably are not direct school board employees, but they will have direct contact with children. The people who run school cafeterias, for the most part, are employees of a caterer who has been contracted, not a school board employee. The people who drive buses are employees of bus companies, not school boards. The people who drive taxis, who take a special-needs child to school from home—one-on-one contact with a very vulnerable child—are definitely not school board employees; they work for taxi companies. Other examples might be the photographers who do school pictures or the person who comes from a school yearbook publisher and works with the kids to lay it out. The list goes on and on.

Other categories would be faculties of education. The students from the faculty of education, over the course of the year, will be placed in various schools in various school boards to do practice teaching and practicums. We also, if you extend it, would have places like the Michener Institute, which does education in the health professions; for example, respiratory technologists or ultrasound and MRI technicians—but, who, again, in the course of their practicum, will be dealing with vulnerable people.

All those people need checks. This is a good idea.

Back in 2000 or so, when this legislation was tabled, boards tried to make it work. But the experience was that there are literally hundreds of police service boards in this province, literally thousands of service providers, and the quality of the checks was extraordinarily inconsistent. Some were vulnerable sector, some weren't; some cost \$10, some cost \$50; some police service boards don't do checks, some take months and months to do checks, and some will do them while you wait. When you put this all together, what you had was total chaos.

One young teacher I was talking to, who was a teacher at the time, or going through teacher ed at the time, has had two different criminal reference checks for purposes of practicums and another couple of criminal reference checks for working with different boards. She has had so many criminal reference checks at different police departments that it's sort of like a revolving door. The interesting thing is, those checks took anywhere from while-you-wait-at-the-counter to five months. Clearly the five-month part of it is not viable.

So what did the boards do? What the boards did was set up something called the Ontario Educational Services Corp., or OESC, which is, in essence, an agent of all 72 school boards. It was set up by the four school boards: the French public, the French Catholic, the English Catholic and the English public. It worked on behalf of all 72 school boards. It primarily does the service providers and the volunteers. In 2009, this one organization did 50,000 checks. Other sectors have similar organizations; it's not the only one. This has the advantage of consistency. It has the advantage that the vulnerablesector check is getting done. It has the advantage that no matter what service provider you are or what area of the province, you're getting asked the same questions, the same standards for what's clear and what's not clear. It brought what was chaotic into a very smoothly working system—until the RCMP issued a directive to every police force in Canada to stop doing third party reference checks. The whole system that had been built up ground to a halt.

I want to assure parents who are listening that school boards are still doing direct checks on their own direct employees. The teacher in the classroom is still getting the check. The educational assistant working with your child is still getting the check. I don't want to put people into a panic. But there's a whole host of service providers out there for whom it is very, very difficult to get checks in a timely manner.

Let me give you an example, because I think we have representatives from the faculties of education here. What was happening in years past is that at this time of year, when acceptances are going out, the students were told, "You must go to OESC and get your reference check done over the summer. Then, when you start classes in September, no matter what board you get sent to, your OESC clearance will be proof that you've had the clearance. If you don't get OESC clearance, we know there's something wrong, and we'd better be looking into that, because, are you really a good candidate?" But that has all been shut down—doing it in this consistent and timely manner.

What my motion asks for is that we ask the federal government, the RCMP, to revisit this policy, to look at their third party policy and to work with the third party providers who are doing a good job to get a protocol and get back to work and get these checks done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to rise today to make a few comments on the member from Guelph's motion. I'd like to read it again into the record. It's Ms. Sandals' motion: "That, in the opinion of this House, the Legislature of Ontario petition the Prime Minister of Canada and the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to amend their policy directive regarding third party access to the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) databases immediately to make it possible to screen potential employees, service providers and volunteers who are potentially in positions of trust and authority with vulnerable persons such as children and youth who are served by organizations such as school boards or their agents (pursuant to regulation 521/01 of the Education Act, Ontario), health and social service agencies, municipalities and volunteer organizations. including the ability to determine in a timely manner if an individual has been pardoned for a conviction for a sexual offence."

I support what the member is trying to accomplish with this resolution. I wasn't really 100% sure of the impact of this until it hit me a couple of months back with a volunteer organization. I think maybe I mentioned it to the member. I've done a lot of petitions and comments in this House on the Wye Marsh, which is an environmental centre up in our riding. Each and every year, I believe around 25,000 students go through the Wye Marsh for environmental education. It's a really great program. It's kind of an icon in our community, and we do a lot of fundraising. It's just a great organization, particularly for a lot of young people.

I was talking to one of the members of the board of directors, and he brought to my attention that they were having a really difficult time getting the CPIC analysis done on their volunteers. This organization has a movement of volunteers. Throughout the year, probably 10% or 15% of their volunteers retire or move on and new people come in, but there are always 300 or 400 volunteers on a regular basis helping out at events, and children are almost always involved. Young people are involved, whether it's on tours, cross-country skiing, hiking, canoeing, you name it—all these sorts of things.

There are 3,000 acres they work with there. They were getting really concerned about this and they asked me what we could possibly do, because they didn't want to try to create some of their own policy. They liked the program that was in place before, and they needed to make sure that they could move forward in a positive manner.

Just yesterday, I was with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration at a conference in Orillia at Geneva Park. It was by a group called PAVR-O, and it's basically administrators of volunteers throughout the province. They represent hospital boards and non-profits—that type of thing. One of the things that we were discussing was the fact that today in our society we've got the public sector, we've got the private sector, and something I found interesting that the minister was saying is that we've got the volunteer sector. The volunteer sector provides literally millions of hours of volunteer work throughout our province, and it helps so many organizations basically survive.

When we talk about getting a background check, we're talking about something that's very important to many, many organizations, and we have to get this thing right. I'm in favour of doing whatever we can do, whether it's through this private member's resolution—although I do think that when we're dealing with the federal government, we have to make sure that we engage our Minister of Community Safety and the government itself. I'd like to hear what the minister is saying on this, because I think it's important that this debate takes place and we get the clarification and the improvements required so that all of these organizations can background check their volunteers in a very, very timely manner.

If you look around the province—and I'm basically zeroing in on volunteers, not on school boards at all. I understand the issues around employees, janitors, teachers, people working in food services in schools etc. I completely understand the importance there. But I can tell you that in Ontario in general, when you look at sporting organizations and all the kinds of different programs young people are involved in today, we have to make sure that we do deal with this in a timely manner.

I look forward to the passing of this resolution, but I also look forward to the debate that I think we should begin almost immediately between members of the cabinet and possibly the Minister of Community Safety and his colleagues in Ottawa, making sure that we get this thing to a point where we can make sure that organizations aren't having to worry. These are all volunteer people in these volunteer organizations and they need to have the assurance that they've got the support both at the provincial and the federal level as we move towards making sure that people who are working particularly with young people can get background checks in a timely and proper manner.

I'll be supporting that, and I appreciate very much the ability to say this today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you kindly, Speaker. One, New Democrats are going to be supporting this motion; two, we applaud the sponsor of this motion for bringing the motion forward.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Wonderful.

Mr. Peter Kormos: But Ms. Wynne, you know there is a "however" coming.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I was trying to pre-empt it.

1450

Mr. Peter Kormos: Third, we find this a subject that is sufficiently important that it should not just be a matter of a motion. I would encourage the sponsor, Ms. Sandals, to perhaps consider getting support to use standing order 126 to have a committee look at the proposition. Because it's a motion, we don't have jurisdiction to do legislation. Ms. Sandals and I talked about this just a few minutes ago. That means that it doesn't, as of right, go to committee. It can't be forced into a committee by the standing orders, but a 126 application could put this matter in front of a committee for consideration and indeed could allow the committee to go beyond the scope of this motion, which talks about the prohibition against third party access to CPIC records.

However, let's put this in a broader context as well. We understand that nobody does a criminal record search or any of the variations—we casually call it a criminal record search, but there are any number of types that can be done; I'll talk about that in just a few minutes without the consent of the person whose background is being searched; that's a given. So far as I'm aware, anybody anywhere can, upon payment, apply to any police services board, any police authority, in any part of the province. The payments vary from modest to, in some places, more expensive, because there's no standard in the province; there's no regulation of what police services boards can charge for them. I appreciate that scarce resources in police services boards compel them to charge for these things. Also, I suppose, their argument might be that they want to control unnecessary or frivolous access by individuals. It's done with the consent of the individual; anybody can apply for it.

The issue here is third parties. As Ms. Sandals explained it to me—and I'm very grateful for that explanation, and it's because of her particular background and expertise with school boards and trustees on those boards—school boards across the province have gathered together and formed an entity that will process criminal record searches for those boards from one central source. That's the third party that Ms. Sandals refers to in the motion. It's that third party that the RCMP directivebecause the RCMP controls, or perhaps owns, CPIC; I'm not sure about "controls" CPIC. That's the RCMP directive that Ms. Sandals is referring to, which she says interferes with third party access. That means that the subject can still apply for a CPIC search, should he or she be inclined to. That means, as I understand it, that the employer can also apply for a criminal record search, of course with the consent of the potential employee or volunteer.

Let's understand some of the shortcomings, though, of this in general—not of the motion; the motion's fine. We learned just recently that CPIC is oftentimes incomplete. We learned that, from police service to police service, sometimes there's—what, Mr. Levac?—as much as a sixmonth lag in getting the information from that police service, from the courts in that community, onto the CPIC record. There is also, as I understand it, no consistency in what's reported to CPIC by a local police service.

Finally, there's the question of what a criminal record search really tells you. It tells you that a person has been convicted of an offence that identifies her or him as someone unsuitable, but it doesn't identify the person who has never been caught or convicted.

I used to practise criminal law a long time ago, and-

Mr. Dave Levac: A good one, at that.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I want to make sure that's in Hansard.

My experience in working with some very tragic criminal cases is that most child molesters—let's be candid; we're talking about child molesters here, by and large; that's the primary focus—never get caught. They're clever; they're stealthy; they're vulpine in their style. Again, they prey on children because they know that children can't fight back, and they also know that children are less likely to report.

Secondly, of those who are accused or charged, there's a significant portion even now, after all the changes in the Criminal Code and the case law—cases like Khan, for instance, and Criminal Code changes that permit a screen to be placed in front of a child witness; all these various safeguards—even now, it's not a sure thing that a person charged, even if he or she is in fact, the person who perpetrated the offence, is going to be found guilty.

I mention that and I've had occasion to mention that before because we've sort of adopted criminal record searches as the cure-all, and they're not. The fact is that if they are overly relied upon, it means that we treat them as the absolute screening tool, and that means that a whole lot of dangerous people have the potential to be put in positions where children are put at risk. So we've just got to put that in perspective. I really believe Ms. Sandals understands that aspect of it.

Now, we have this other problem, and that is that CPIC only contains what's transmitted to it. As I understand it, CPIC has to contain, or at least ought to contain, all convictions. Then again, Ms. Sandals would point out that—and we've had this recent flurry of newspaper items and a little bit of grandstanding and politicking around the issue of people who have received pardons and who therefore do not have a criminal record for the purpose of a criminal record disclosure. Our pardons act does not clear the person. The person isn't presumed innocent, but simply for the purpose of being asked, "Have you ever been convicted of an offence for which you have not received a pardon?" you can honestly say no. At the border, for instance, you won't be stopped because the American access to criminal records, which

is CPIC-based, won't reveal a criminal record if you have been pardoned for that offence. So there are some dangers, and we understand the federal government is going to toughen up on that. I think it was a surprise to most people that serious offenders could receive pardons as casually as somebody who, when they were 17 years old, smoked a little bit of marijuana and happened to get caught. Nowadays you can smoke it and you don't—the other day here at Queen's Park, Ms. DiNovo, I happened to be in Toronto. I was driving—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: No, I was in a cab on College and there was this huge blue haze over Queen's Park. I looked—I was down at the Steelworkers Hall on Cecil Street for Gord Brigden's memorial service, and there's this blue haze over Queen's Park. I thought, "My God, not my office." There are all sorts of things in there that are very dear to me. But of course it was all the kids smoking pot here at Queen's Park, and all the cops surrounding them getting contact highs. Well, it was inevitable.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Have we lost the thread here?

Mr. Peter Kormos: No, we haven't. I had the cabbie roll down all the windows and stop for two red lights at College and University.

But we're not talking about somebody who, when they were 17 or 18, got caught with marijuana. We're talking about people who are convicted of serious, serious offences, and they pose a danger to the community, especially to young kids.

The problem is that you have different levels of record searches. There is a very broad-based one that's available primarily at the local level because it's a police contact. That may not be the most accurate phrase, but then again—and that means if you were ever arrested, for instance, for a particular offence, even though you were found not guilty, it will show up on that search. That in itself may be unfair. One of the interesting things, and one of the things that I urge of Ms. Sandals, if she indeed is going to consider a standing order 126 application, would be to get the privacy commissioner's views on exactly to what extent non-conviction data could legitimately be included. It surely would be of some interest, notwithstanding the presumption of innocence, to understand that a potential employee or volunteer who was going to have contact with young kids was charged with three separate incidents over a span of, let's say, nine or 10 years, with sexual assault or sexual interference with children, but acquitted each time. You would still want to ask some questions, huh? You wouldn't want to simply say, "Well, fine, there was no conviction. Let's move on," notwithstanding the paramountcy of presumption of innocence. So it really would be interesting to have the privacy commissioner get engaged.

The fundamental question is for the RCMP and the federal Minister of Justice to explain why this directive went out, to get a clear rationale for why the RCMP

would use this directive. If there is a need for third party agencies—and we're primarily talking about one here, although Ms. Sandals indicates it could be any other number of them. Big Brothers across Ontario, for instance, could decide to use the same sort of collaborative or co-operative approach, having one office process all their criminal record search applications. I think it is important to understand why the RCMP did this. I, for the life of me, can't think of any cogent reasons. Trying to enter the RCMP rationale, their thinking cap, for a moment, I can't think of any cogent reasons. Is this stuff expensive? Of course it is. Does it put a new tax on police resources? Of course it does. But it's not being done frivolously.

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We're getting very serious here, finally. I say "finally" because, heck, even 25 years ago criminal record searches were rare. As a matter of fact, I am familiar with agencies that were reluctant to impose them because it would deter potential volunteers. Well, no kidding it would deter potential volunteers.

One of the other ways of doing it, of course, is to identify the search to ensure that the search is only with respect to certain offences, so that if somebody had a marijuana offence from 20 years earlier in their life, that would be excluded from any report; so that only the offences that were relevant to the position that person was going to hold would be reported. That would address the deterrence aspect of criminal record searches. There may be something you did as a kid that was embarrassing that you wouldn't want revealed in a criminal record search, but you're otherwise a fine person, and the failure to disclose that has nothing to do with your eligibility for a particular job or volunteer role.

So, we support the motion. We think we have a reasonably good handle on it. We appreciate Ms. Sandals's work in this regard. We understand the importance of it.

I want to underscore again, I would be delighted to see this as the subject matter of a study by a committee—the justice committee would be a reasonably good one. Under standing order 126, which permits once a session for each of three committees to review—you used to be able to do that as a right. You understand that, don't you? A member could move that as a right, but now you need the permission of two thirds of the committee, and I suspect Ms. Sandals might just be able to obtain that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further lebate?

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: It's my pleasure to join in this debate today. It's very exciting to be part of this discussion.

Interjection.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Mum is watching right now. Mum, the member from Welland is heckling me. He says hi.

Mr. Peter Kormos: No, I'm not.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: No, he's being very lovely. Thank you.

I'm delighted to speak on this as the PA to education, and I'm delighted to speak on it due to my 12 years as a member of the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Council in Waterloo region. I'm delighted to speak on this as a member of the safe schools action team and, previously, as part of the community partnership initiative that brought people together to create safe and healthy communities.

First and foremost, I really want to commend the member from Guelph. The work that she has done throughout my entire career in education in keeping kids safe in school has been really outstanding. It's incomparable, really. It's all I've ever known and looked up to. She has been a role model and mentor for all of the educators in Ontario, and I thank her for that.

This is about third party access today to the Canadian Police Information Centre, or CPIC, databases for possible screening with vulnerable persons. As an educator, I can't stress enough how important it is that we have information; that we're able to communicate information we need to keep our kids safe, whether they're at school, whether they're in the neighbourhood or wherever it is, especially when we have vulnerable populations who work or function on a premise of trust. It is our moral imperative to make sure we create that safety net.

I'm going to digress, but the safety net, of course—I always use the reference to Holden Caulfield in The Catcher in the Rye. Holden always said—

Mr. Peter Kormos: Watch the language, though.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: I'll watch the language, absolutely; thanks for that.

If he could have anything in this world, Holden Caulfield wanted to be the catcher in the rye, to stop all the little children from falling off the edge of the cliff. That's what we're doing here today. Again, I commend the member for Guelph, because we need the information, we need that communication, we need access to records to be able to create the safety net and stop the children from falling off the edge of the cliff.

I have a few items I wanted to briefly touch on. There's an article from the Hamilton Spectator that spoke exactly to this on May 5. It states:

"There is a whole system dedicated to preventing convicted sex offenders from having access to society's most vulnerable members.

"So that sex offenders never coach our children. Or enter our schools. Or work in our nursing homes....

"It is a complicated system fraught with legal hurdles and inconsistencies, and it doesn't always work the way it should....

"In December, the RCMP cracked down on the criminal background check process and now the fallout is taking effect...."

"There are two kinds of background checks." There's the CPIC that the member from Welland referred to and there's the vulnerable sector screening check, which goes further. The article goes on to say, "In December, the RCMP said third party companies could no longer be

used because it is an infringement on the applicant's privacy rights."

Unfortunately, I think this is where the debate and the discussion needs to occur. The article ends in saying that unfortunately, "it is an honour system.... Problem is, the people the system is trying to weed out don't have any honour."

When we look at what our responsibility is and saying that we need to have access to this information, what we want for our youth and our children is a safe and positive learning environment. I do want to say that since 2004, this government has invested \$178 million in safe schools. Nobody knows this better than the member from Guelph, because she was part of all of those initiatives that have come to such success in Ontario in our schools.

It's fascinating. I would refer you to the website of the Canadian centre for missing children. Just a couple of items out of here that I think really stress for us the significance and the importance of this discussion today. It says, "Children are the most vulnerable members of our communities, and as a result, they are the ones most at risk of abuse and/or maltreatment.... The people who molest children are often not the people that we would expect. Evidence shows" that these people "do not often fit the comforting myth of the obvious pervert waiting around the corner, peeking from the bushes. Child molesters can be relatives, neighbours, school teachers, camp leaders...."

It goes on to say, "It is refreshing to see that, increasingly, voluntary agencies, sports organizations and others are seeking the help of police in conducting screening checks. Clearly we are beginning to recognize the need for better information...." Of course, we want to encourage this information flow, this communication, and we don't want to hinder it.

One of the main objections, it says, to allowing people to be screened is that it's an infringement on personal rights. Again, I would refer you to this discussion on the web, because it's quite fascinating. It says, "Screening allows the employer to know who they are hiring to work with children.... It is not as simple as saying that anyone who has any kind of police record cannot be a volunteer. The presence of a criminal record may not justify refusal of employment." It goes on to say that you can discuss what the offence was, and then it goes into detail about if the background check finds nothing, the negative record is returned to the agency. But if it has a hit, if it finds something, it's returned to the individual. Then it's their responsibility, "leaving it to the individual's discretion to disclose the results of whether there is a criminal record." I don't know about you, but I have three sons in sports at school and I really am not comfortable with it being left to the discretion of the individual who's had a positive hit on a background check to disclose.

Finally, I'll leave you with a quote at the end. They say, "Our children are our greatest resource; they represent our future. For this reason all children must be protected and given a chance to grow up safe and happy. To achieve this goal, society must shift its focus from the

abuse of children after the fact to preventing it from happening at all." That's exactly what the member from Guelph is doing for us here today, and I commend her and thank her for that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further debate?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak on this very important motion. I want to echo the member from Kitchener-Conestoga by complimenting our colleague from Guelph for bringing forward a very important issue to this House. She has worked extensively on issues around safe schools, bullying and homophobia, and I think this particular motion is part and parcel of ensuring that we have places in our society, be they our schools or our playgrounds or our youth centres, that are safe for our children and youth, period. We should take every step possible to ensure that those who interact with our young people, our children and youth, are people who would not in any way jeopardize the safety of the vulnerable population in our society.

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We, collectively as members of this House and as members of our communities, do a lot of work to ensure that our children are being brought up in a healthy and safe environment, and we need to make sure that we have instruments in place that ensure that.

I will be very frank with you, Mr. Speaker. I probably would not have really thought about this issue that deeply until the whole issue around Mr. Graham James came about, which has been in the news for the last few days. This is somebody who was a former junior hockey coach who sexually assaulted, I believe, at least two young players a few hundred times, as I recall reading in the papers, was convicted of that crime, and recently was pardoned and has been located in Mexico.

Yes, he's not harming any of our children here, but it really raises an issue that here's somebody who has gone back and integrated well into society, and that's not problematic. They should, hopefully, be able to integrate back into society—that is extremely important—and hopefully will contribute to the betterment of our society and our community. No doubt about that either. But we want to make sure that the interaction with our young people is limited. We want to make sure that, again, there are tools in place like the vulnerable-sector screening check, like the CPIC check, which will allow us to weed out, if I can use that term, those individuals from interacting with our young people.

Once again, I commend the member from Guelph for bringing this important issue. I echo this motion and urge the federal government, the Prime Minister and the RCMP to reinstate that check, that information so that we can ensure that our children and youth remain safe in our communities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate.

Mr. Dave Levac: I just have a few moments to say a couple of words about this particular motion. First of all,

to the member from Guelph, as a friend and colleague: a very smart way to proceed with this.

To give some assurances to the House and the opposition member who brought up the concern, the member from Simcoe North, I just want to review very quickly for him the Ontario Education Services Corp., OESC. They have chronologically allowed me to indicate to you that on December 22, they dealt with the provincial government and the RCMP; January 5, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services; January 7, the same ministries—and the list is endless.

So I can assure them that the provincial government has, indeed, been participating in trying to move this forward. This was not intended by the RCMP, so I hope no one gets the impression that the RCMP said, "Let's cause a lot of havoc across the province of Ontario and Canada." Not the case. So, I think we need to put that to bed.

The other thing we need to put to bed is that no one is going to stand up and say they want bad people in front—we don't want that to happen, so I don't think anyone, any organization, any individual wants to allow bad people to get in front of kids or vulnerable adults. We want to be sure about that.

Last but not least, the member from Welland is absolutely bang-on with his comments outside, I think, in terms of this motion. Let's talk to the feds. Let's talk to the RCMP. Let's move this forward and get this taken care of, for our kids' sakes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to rise just for a moment and thank the member from Guelph for bringing this motion forward.

I've heard a lot of people speaking to it who have a lot more knowledge about this issue than I do, as does the member from Guelph, but my concern has been that in Oxford county we've seen, since the—first of all, I should say that the resolution speaks to asking the federal government to change their protocol or their process, not to change the law, and that is because the information in the past was available to our local police to do these background checks in a reasonable time frame to deal with the applications that were going forward. If someone's applying to volunteer somewhere, they needed the check done and they needed it done in a reasonable length of time. People who were looking for a job that required this type of check need that report back in a reasonable length of time.

All of a sudden we started hearing that they were told that because it was going to the RCMP, it was going to take an awful lot longer to get a report back. In fact, some people came into our office when the opportunity that they had was at risk because of the time it took to get that information back. It would seem to me that if this information is available to the people's representatives, to the government of this country, and consequently to the government of Ontario and to the people of Ontario, we should find a timely way to access the best possible

information and do the checks, not only to protect our children but to facilitate the people to volunteer and work in our society with those children.

I commend them for bringing it forward. Hopefully, when we have the government talk to the Prime Minister, the federal government and the RCMP, they can at least facilitate that our police authorities get this information so we can get these timely checks done, and the people of my community can get these checks done so they can work with the children who would be at risk.

I really do have some concern, presently, that when it takes so long to do it, the decision-makers who are going to allow people to work with the community in the jobs that they've applied for and are waiting for the background checks will, at some point, say, "Okay, it's going to take too long. Why don't we just proceed in spite of not having that check? We'll get that as we go down the road." If we have a protocol that says that these checks need to be done before they can take that position, then I don't think that, because of the process that governments have created, we should take that risk, even for that period of time. Anything we can do to facilitate those checks and do it in a timely manner, I think, will serve all of our people well.

I commend the member from Guelph for bringing this forward and I thank her for not only doing this, but for pointing it out. Up until the debate today, I was not aware that the change in the requests coming into my office was actually related to the changing of the protocol from the federal government and the RCMP that prevented our OPP from being able to do the background checks that they had been doing in an orderly fashion and as quickly as possible in the past, and now they no longer could do that. I commend her for bringing this forward so we can get that straightened out to go back to when, shall we say, it was working well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member from Guelph has up to two minutes for her response.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you to everyone who was so very, very supportive: the members from Kitchener–Conestoga, Ottawa Centre and Brant. I would just like to follow up with the reassurance that I know that the OESC has spoken to both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and I think the Ontario chiefs of police, and they have all been involved in trying to sort that out. I would commend the member from Oxford on behalf of the Oxford OPP, who have actually been very, very co-operative in trying to make the whole third party system work.

I just wanted to briefly, perhaps, respond to a few of the issues that were raised by the member from Welland. I am always amazed by obscure standing order possibilities that I never heard of before the member brings them up. In this case I will gratefully decline his offer to figure out if one can send this to committee, because right now, quite frankly, speed is of the essence. The point of the year when school boards are figuring out who's going to be doing what for next year is upon us, and it's important

to get criminal reference checks done, as opposed to us sitting and examining our navels in committee. As the member from Oxford mentioned, we do need to make sure that these checks get done in a timely manner or there is the temptation for non-compliance when you can't get the checks done.

The member from Welland was correct in pointing out some problems with the CPIC process, but it does remain our best source of information. If we're going to keep our kids safe, we need access to that information.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time for this ballot item has expired. We'll vote on it in about 50 minutes.

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ESCAPING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR LA FUITE

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA FUITE FACE À LA VIOLENCE FAMILIALE

Mr. Naqvi moved second reading of the following bill: Bill 53, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 with respect to domestic violence / Projet de loi 53, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation à l'égard de la violence familiale.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak on this very important issue.

It was about two months or so ago that a young woman contacted my office requesting that I meet with her. I think all of us get those types of phone calls. My staff inquired as to the purpose; she said it was something personal she would like to discuss.

They set up a meeting. I went to a local coffee house to meet this person, and we sat down. At that moment, this young woman had the courage to tell me her story, a story which involved being in an abusive relationship for approximately three years. She made numerous attempts to leave that abusive relationship and finally, to her credit, she was successful in doing so. But in that ordeal, she shared with me some of the challenges she faced and some of the vacuums or deficiencies in a system by which she could move forward, escape from that domestic violence situation and be able to find a safe place to live.

One of the challenges she highlighted was that, as a financially independent woman, she rented an apartment. She was the tenant; i.e., she was on the tenancy agreement. If she had left her place—and she had to, because the abuser knew where she lived and this place was not safe for her—she was still liable to pay the rent for an extended period of time. There was no recourse available under the Residential Tenancies Act to allow her to cut her ties with that particular place and move away somewhere so she could be safe.

That story really struck me. I think she is watching these proceedings; I want to commend her for her

bravery in coming forward and raising this issue. I think it was one of those moments for all of us, as elected representatives, where you get to hear somebody's personal story, look into the matter, and say, "You know what? She's right. I'm going to do something about it." So it's my true honour to be here today to speak on this bill, which has been inspired by this person who lives in my riding of Ottawa Centre. I want to thank her for bringing that issue.

I also want to thank my staff, who have been tremendous in helping me in getting the research done and getting this drafted and being present here today: Jackie Choquette, Geoff Turner, and my OLIP intern, Paul Di Ianni, who was very instrumental, and of course legislative counsel Tara Partington and Jennifer Gold, who were very helpful in drafting this bill.

We know that domestic violence is a serious criminal offence—no ifs or buts about it. We do not engage, in our society, in domestic violence. It is a criminal act and it should be prosecuted as vigorously as possible. We have laws in place to prevent domestic violence. We all endeavour to put public policy in place to ensure that we prevent any kind of domestic violence. We need to make sure that we move away from that heinous criminal act that takes place against, most of the time, unfortunately, women in our society.

The data, the statistics, are quite terrifying at times. I'm looking at StatsCan data which says that in 2007, nearly 40,200 incidents of spousal violence were reported to police. This is across Canada. This represents about 12% of all police-reported violent crime in Canada. That is quite high, and this is just spousal violence, which includes married relationships and common-law relationships. This does not include relationships that are outside those definitions. That could be a definition of somebody dating somebody else or just being in a conjugal relationship.

Police also reported that spousal violence has steadily declined over the past 10 years, decreasing 15% between 1998 and 2007, which is encouraging. However, the level of domestic violence relating to non-spousal relationships has been going up, which is extremely disturbing to know.

Also, the majority of victims of spousal violence continue to be females. I think that's not going to come as a surprise to any one of us. According to this data, 83% of victims happen to be women, which is very disturbing.

Another number I wanted to share: 12% of Canadian women aged 18 to 24 reported at least one incident of violence by an intimate partner in a one-year period, compared with the national average of 3% of all married or cohabitating women—again, statistics that I think should give us pause when we're looking at this matter.

Governments, of course, as I was mentioning earlier, have been doing a lot of work. We in Ontario have a domestic violence action plan which ensures that we have seamless services provided to prevent violence against women and issues around domestic violence. We want to make sure that there are mechanisms by which

women can escape an abusive relationship. I think the policy is very clear. One is that if you are in an abusive relationship, you should flee from that relationship—you should find some refuge, be it family or women's shelters—and report the incident to the police, because only then can the police act, lay criminal charges and investigate the matter. It's extremely important that that second part also takes place, that is, reporting the matter to the police. Of course, we need to put in place policies that would encourage victims of domestic violence to do that. There are definitely challenges around that.

In terms of investments made in that area—I won't go into too many numbers—the government is investing more than \$208 million to protect women from violence and support victims of abuse, which includes about \$87 million for the domestic violence action plan, to which I was referring earlier. This has resulted in an increase of about 369 shelter beds across the province for women and children fleeing abuse. Just in my riding, a few months ago, Minister Meilleur and I made an announcement of new funding for a women's shelter to ensure that there are more spaces available in the Ottawa area.

However, having said all that, we have a disconnect in our public policy, and that's what Bill 53 is trying to achieve. The disconnect is as follows: On one hand, as I stated earlier, we encourage women to report assault, encourage anybody who is a victim of domestic violence to take this matter further and report it to the police. But on the other hand, if you are somebody who lives in a residential tenancy environment, if you are a tenant, we make it difficult for you to do so because you are liable for rent. Bill 53 tries to provide a mechanism by which a victim of domestic violence could terminate the lease in a manner that protects the interests of the landlord, but also allows for the tenant, with the least amount of penalty, to get out of the lease.

I'm mindful of the time, so let me just highlight some of the key features of the legislation. One thing it does is allow for 28 days or, let's say, a month period to terminate the lease. So a tenant who is a victim of domestic violence can gave a 28-day notice to terminate their lease, which means the landlord gets to keep at least one month's rent, most likely the last month's rent, which is already paid in deposit. The victim also has to at least produce documentary evidence to substantiate that he or she is a victim of domestic violence, and that could be a restraining order under the Criminal Code, a peace bond under the Family Law Act or a letter from the police stating that an investigation has been commenced. That will obviously require the woman to approach the police and file a complaint. One of these documents, plus a 28day notice, is sufficient to then terminate the lease. That, in essence, is the scheme that is outlined.

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Right now, essentially you are liable for the rent owing. If you're on a month-to-month basis, then you have to give 60 days' notice, which could be a huge impediment. If you're on a fixed term, then you are liable for the remainder of the term on that lease, which could

be any number of months; it could be 10 months, six months or only three months. That could be a huge impediment.

In the Residential Tenancies Act today, there is an opportunity for the tenant to work with the landlord and mutually agree. That option is still available. Most landlords are good people and they will allow that option to be exercised. But we do have some circumstances in which that won't happen. By adopting Bill 53, we're providing a very defined mechanism which allows a victim of domestic violence, with some documentary evidence, to terminate the lease and which makes sure that the victim is in a safe place.

That is exactly what we want to do. That's exactly what government policy is. That's exactly what all the advocates against domestic violence plead: that we ensure that the person is able to escape and report the matter to the police so that the abuser, the perpetrator, could be investigated and, if they are convicted, sentenced accordingly. That is pretty much what I'm asking to do.

There is a confidentiality clause in this legislation, ensuring that landlords don't pass this information to any future landlords, again to protect the integrity of the victim.

If there is any misleading information which is knowingly being posed, then there is a provision for fines under the Residential Tenancies Act that will apply in that situation, again to ensure that there is no wilful abuse taking place of this particular bill.

Once again, I think this is a relevant issue. It's important to make sure that we protect victims of domestic violence and ensure that they continue to live in a safe place—not only them but their dependent children, if a child is at risk—so that they can find a refuge and be in a safe place.

I really ask all members to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to start off by saying that I support taking steps to help victims of domestic abuse, and I think everyone in this Legislature would agree with that principle. I want to commend the member from Ottawa Centre for his efforts in trying to do that. I understand how he was touched by the story of his constituent who was trying to escape a dangerous situation, and I want to commend him for his efforts to help her with that.

But I do want to speak about a few of the concerns about the bill. I think it was evident from the presentation by the member that this is about domestic abuse, but this bill is only a very small part of it. I dare say that someone—even the constituent that the member spoke about—would likely accept that having to pay one more month's rent was the least of her problems after those three years of domestic abuse.

As I say, I want to point out some of the concerns that I have with the bill, but I do also want to say that I will be supporting the bill on second reading. I believe it's a

very important thing to have more discussion on that. The things that I have a problem with in the bill are not insurmountable. I think the principle that is there is appropriate. I think sending the bill to committee and having further discussion and amendments to it to make it work is a good idea.

But in reading the bill, I was a bit confused as to what it would actually do, who it would apply to and who would benefit from it. I don't claim to be a lawyer, as is the member who introduced the bill, or even an expert on anything very much. Some of you may have come to the conclusion that I'm a politician, and the prerequisite for a politician is not necessarily being an expert on anything.

As I read the whole bill, I find it somewhat confusing, so if I find it confusing, I really believe that the average person who is to benefit from this bill is not going to understand it either. And I think that's the big problem. I think we need to spell out what we're trying to do much more clearly for the people who need to benefit from it.

I know it's difficult to design legislation to deal with situations like this because you want to ensure that it's broad enough to include all victims, and the last thing any of us wants is to cause anyone who has been the victim of domestic violence any more difficulties. We don't want them to get caught up in a lot of red tape. We want it to be expeditiously administered.

At the same time, we don't want to make legislation so broad that others try to take advantage of it. Under this legislation, it's possible that someone who doesn't want to live with their boyfriend anymore would make out a false report and some of the other documentation that's required, one piece of evidence. If they were living together with someone, they could report it to the police. It doesn't say there has to be a conviction; just that it was investigated by police. Then they could get out of a lease they had signed, a legal contract that they've agreed to and that everyone else has to live by. Someone could use that. So, I think it needs to be more clearly defined as to what would allow people to do that.

The landlord and tenant rules are an attempt to balance the needs of both parties. While we want to help victims, we need to ensure that people do not use this legislation to falsely break a lease or force landlords into a position where they expected to get a return on their investment on a regular basis monthly and all of a sudden there's a new law in place that allows someone to avoid paying for that time of notice that they were obligated to give.

We need to make sure that the people who use this legislation are the ones it's intended to help, and I think the member would agree. For instance, one of the situations described in the bill is a reckless act that causes damage to property, which, to me, seems to be a pretty broad category. That's a reason for being able to get out of the 60 days. I don't know how that would work.

Going on, I think there needs to be some connection between what has happened and why the person needs to get out of a lease. For instance, a husband and wife are sharing the rent on an apartment and the husband gets violent and is forced to leave and the wife can't afford to pay the rent totally on her own. I believe that absolutely she should not be forced to stay in the apartment and pay for an extra month because she's unable to pay that rent. But there has to be a connection as to why the person wants to move or needs to move and the abuse that has taken place. I don't think it should be just a time that we can get out of a legal contract.

In St. Catharines—and this is another story that I think relates to the bill. In St. Catharines, there was the sad story of a girl who was being stalked by her next-door neighbour. You may remember that my colleague from Whitby—Oshawa raised this issue in the Legislature and asked why the crown wasn't doing more to help that family. The mother had found a number of footprints outside the house and set up an infrared camera to investigate what was going on. What she found was that the next-door neighbour's son was peering into her daughter's bedroom window.

I'm not going into the details of what happened, but it's fair to say that family were victims and they were failed by the court system. Without informing the family, the crown withdrew charges against the young man. The crown did not proceed with the lesser charge. The crown did not even ask for a peace bond to ensure the family's security and the young man's rehabilitation. This family was forced to live next door to the young man they knew was stalking them. The family next door is even alleged to have pointed a camera directly at the bedroom window.

In this case, the family owned the house, so obviously we know that this piece of legislation would not help them. But even if they had been tenants, this legislation would not have covered that situation because the requirement of domestic violence was not there, as is required in the legislation. I believe that that type of victim should be covered in exactly the same way. If that was a rented apartment, they should have been covered just as much as if it had been domestic violence.

In order for this bill to apply, the person who was alleged to have committed the act or omission must fall into the categories listed. Again, this is where I think we need more debate on the bill. Only one of the categories has to do with where a person lives, so in fact a lot of things could be happening. The abuse and a lot of the things could be attached to somewhere different from where you live. Where you live is only the one thing.

Some of this violence may very well occur with people not living in the same house. Some of the reasons why they need to move may be well beyond someone they have lived with or are living with at the present time.

If it's a safety issue—the person needs to move because the person who is alleged to have committed the abuse knows where they live—then I think this bill is addressing the wrong issue. We need to do a better job of preventing violence and protecting victims to ensure they are not driven from their homes. Again, I don't think it's appropriate to put laws in place that make the victims of abuse also victims in having to move.

It becomes very important that we address some of these issues in the bill. I could go on; I do have a copy of the bill here, and some of the things in it are hard to understand. But to me, it narrows instead of broadens the scope of who would qualify for this. At the same time, I don't want it so broad that everyone qualifies and all of a sudden what we've done is just changed the amount of notice required under the Residential Tenancies Act from 60 days to 30 days.

If I talk to landlords in this province, a lot of them say that the Residential Tenancies Act already allows far too many days between the time that tenants should be leaving and the time they actually get out of the establishment or out of the house. I think it's important that this law doesn't make that worse, yet does everything it can to protect people from domestic violence and assist them in any way we, as a society, can to make sure they can get on with their lives in peace and quiet, shall we say, and not be bothered by that.

Again, I commend the member opposite for his efforts to help victims, and hope we will have a chance to go to committee and address the concerns of this bill so we can work collectively to do the best we can for the domestic wielence people he is trying to help.

violence people he is trying to help.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: First and foremost, let me say to the member from Ottawa Centre that I'm delighted to support his bill; I will be voting for it. I'm delighted whenever the words "domestic violence" and the issue are raised in this chamber, because it's such an intractable problem, and a problem that, as women's critic for the New Democratic Party, I have made a focus of some of my work here.

He gave you the stats. Suffice it to say that somewhere between one in four and one in two women will experience violence in their lifetime, the vast majority of that domestic. That's how horrible the statistics are and how awful is the impact on lives.

I'm reminded of a story about assault against women told to me by a woman who had worked in the former Yugoslavia. She described going into what were literally called rape camps for some of the victims of that war—we know that rape is now used as a method of war in various countries in the world. In this instance, she said there was something like 23,000 victims whom they had identified during that conflict.

She came back, in her case, to the United States and was telling somebody the story, and her friend in the United States didn't raise an eyebrow—didn't seem surprised at all. She said, "Don't you find that shocking: 23,000 cases?" She said, "No, there are 700,000 cases in the United States every year." Think about it: 700,000 cases of rape in the United States every year. If that's not a war on women, I don't know what is. That's what these stats mean. Sometimes when we use them—when we say, "One in four, one in two"—we don't see the horrendous numbers behind them. This is an ongoing problem.

I also want to commend two of my colleagues from both of the other parties in the House for taking part with me in one of the attempts to address the problem in faith communities. Ruth's Daughters of Canada was launched here last week. It was wonderful. I also thank Jim Coyle for the lovely column he did on this initiative. Donna Cansfield and Christine Elliott were part of the support for that initiative. We're trying to really get women in all faith communities across the faith spectrum to get active around the issue where they live and pray and work. This is so important.

We have some concerns with the bill. These are not insurmountable and certainly don't detract from my support in any way. In fact, if the member addresses these concerns, I think that will make the bill a great deal stronger for the victims we are all trying to help. They were suggested by the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, and I want to give them kudos for the work they do with tenants across the board, not just in the case of domestic violence.

I have to say that it would have been helpful as a backdrop to this bill were my motion passed—which is on the order paper—calling for an all-woman, all-party committee to look at domestic violence. This is one of the sad by-products of the kind of partisan warfare that happens in this place; that we can't get together to do even that; that we can't, as women independent of political stripe, get together to look at this horrendous situation that exists in our midst that affects all of us. We know there isn't a person here who does not have a relative or a friend who has been affected by domestic violence. That's what those statistics tell us: that everyone has been touched by it in some way, shape or form.

Twelve percent of all police-reported violent crime in Canada is domestic violence, more than one in 10 calls. My husband was a police officer briefly for Kitchener-Waterloo, and he says the call they feared the most was the call to a domestic violence home. It was the most frightening, the most dangerous, and of course stayed with you the longest—because we have to remember that most of the time the victims of domestic violence are not just adult women, they're also children, particularly girl children who have been the victims of sexual and physical abuse by their fathers or stepfathers or the man in the house—83% of them. Who wants to go to a call like that, even as a fully armed police officer? That's what we ask our police to do. Trust me, they'd rather do just about anything else in the line of duty than that.

Here is how I think we can make the bill stronger, and that's what I want to focus on. First of all, the notice period is a little confusing. Twenty-eight days can only be effective—this is reading from the bill—at the end of the month, after the month is given. That is, if it is given on March 2, it can only be effective on April 30, and the date must be specified. If it is specified to be effective on March 31, it's void. Why? And 47.1(3): Application of the deposit should be mandatory—this is important—so the word "shall" instead of "may," in keeping with subsection 105, part 10. Again, it just makes it stronger.

Perhaps more importantly, though, the bill specifies that the tenant or their child is not a victim unless there is

an order from the courts or a letter from the police or a number of other documentary pieces of evidence. Just picture yourself, a woman who has been assaulted or a mother of a child who has been assaulted. You want to get out of that place as quickly as possible. You want to get to safety as quickly as possible. Often, not every case of domestic abuse or violence goes to the police or the courts. Usually there's a pattern. Usually there has been a call or two, but the domestic violence is an ongoing problem. Sometimes you don't have documentary evidence. I think, really, to make this bill stronger, that you want to allow the victim to go immediately, without thoughts of "Oh my goodness, I've got to get a court order," or "I've got to get a piece of evidence for the police," or "Where did I put it?" even if they have it. Because often when you're fleeing, you're fleeing with not much: a satchel, your purse; that's it. Again, I think by taking that out it makes it more powerful.

The other smaller concern to me is the confidentiality of all of this for the victims. Is there some imperative for the landlord to keep this information confidential? I think that would strengthen the bill if that was the case.

Of course, the question looms: Once the victim or victims have left, where do they go? This leads to the broader-ranging topics of how we really deal with victims of domestic violence, and that is, where do they run to? We do not have a policy in Ontario of ensuring that there's a safe place to run to.

Just two nights ago, I went to a party hosted by the Redwood shelter in my riding. Certainly they get the vast majority of any extra money I have, in terms of charitable giving. They, of course, talk about the lack of funding, the fact that every woman and every child who flees a domestic violence situation does not have a place to go. There aren't enough shelter beds and, quite frankly, there are many, many women out there who don't want to run to a shelter. They'd rather stay and suffer. So we need transitional housing, real housing.

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There are other jurisdictions that do this better than we do, that will provide transitional housing for women and who will all of a sudden bump them to the head of the list when they leave situations of abuse. We need that. Of course, with 140,000 families waiting on the affordable housing wait-list in Ontario, it's very easy to see why we don't have transitional housing for victims of domestic violence. This, again, is one of the reasons we need more housing dollars and more housing action in this province. This is the sad, sad result of that.

We also need equity with teeth to it. Women make 71 cents for every dollar that men make in this province, so there are economic constraints upon women for leaving domestic violence situations. Many women who have been homemakers, who have been raising their children, don't have a job to go to and they don't have money to go to. They need help. The help that we can give, in part, is to fund equity commissions so that they can do the good work that they should be doing, and to make sure

that those women who are leaving have some kind of immediate funding backup.

It's very important, of course that we make it extremely easy for women and children leaving domestic violence, particularly in a multicultural reality, because we need culturally sensitive supports for women who are leaving, who may not want to go to a shelter for all sorts of reasons, who may not ever want to testify against their abuser for all sorts of safety reasons, who need supports delivered in their mother tongues, who need counsellors who are sensitive to their religious backgrounds and to the reasons why they left in the first place. Too many women are silenced.

I'll just conclude by saying, again, I'm going to support this. We wish it was made stronger, and we'll work to that end, if it comes to committee. I hope it does. Certainly, kudos to the member for even raising the issue here. We need to be raising it all the time.

I remember, as a minister, that the most terrifying time in the many, many years that I was in ministry was not when we were having our evening service and drop-in programs that catered to people with mental health and addiction issues. Sometimes we'd have a hundred people there, many of them using crack actively and quite violent. No, that wasn't the scariest. The scariest moment in ministry was when a middle-class woman came running in on a Saturday afternoon trying to escape her husband, and then he came running in after and went from room to room of the church trying to drag her out. I knew that even if we called the police, it would take them at least 15 to 20 minutes to get there. Meanwhile, not only could she be hurt but other innocent bystanders in the church could be hurt. That was the most terrifying moment. I could only imagine what her life was like day to day, hour to hour.

My friends, we've got to do more. This is just a small step. We've got to take some really big steps, if we're ever going to want to have an equitable society where men and women are really equally safe.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to be able to speak in support of Bill 53 this afternoon. I thought, maybe, I would reflect a little bit about some of the issues that I see in my constituency office, because it just happened that when the member from Ottawa Centre was in the process of tabling this bill, there had been a mum and a daughter in my constituency office. There had been allegations of abuse of the daughter, interestingly enough, by the landlord, and the mum had essentially been told, "You need to get out of here to protect your daughter," by family and children services in the particular community that she had been living in before. There was no women's shelter in the community in which this woman had previously lived, which was a small rural community, so she had come to Guelph and was living in the women's shelter in Guelph. One of her issues was, in fact, "What do I do about the fact that everything I own is in the hands of the landlord who is the abuser of my daughter?"

1600

I'm not sure that this bill 100% applies to that situation, but it certainly demonstrates the fact that while many landlords are going to be co-operative with a woman who is fleeing from violence and abuse, and say, "I understand that you're supposed to give me two months' notice and you're only giving me one," or, "I understand that you've got a lease and you want to break your lease," in this case it was quite clear that there was no way that this particular landlord was going to be in any way co-operative, because it was the landlord who was actually the problem. That's obviously an unusual situation, but it is a situation that I dealt with just a couple of weeks ago.

More generically, certainly when I talk to women in crisis in Guelph and talk to the women who will occasionally come into the constituency office who are in these circumstances, there's often a very long history of abuse, and finally something has gotten so bad that the woman has left.

The crisis shelter in Guelph serves the rural area around Guelph, and it's not unusual in rural areas that in fact the opportunity to leave doesn't arrive until (a) you've got access to transportation, and (b) all the kids are gathered up at home and you've actually got the opportunity to leave, because until you've got control of the vehicle absent the abuser, typically male, you actually can't leave. You really don't have a way of leaving with the family intact. So again, in those situations you've got women who are literally fleeing, going nowhere, with no funding, and the ability to get out of that lease, to be able to give 28 days' notice, to have your last month applied to that—and I do want to assure people who are thinking about rural situations that it isn't that everybody in a rural area owns their own house. They are often renting a house but they are still tenants. Just because they don't live in a high-rise doesn't mean they're not tenants, and we do need to figure out a way to address this.

So I will be supporting the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon. I'd like to thank the member from Ottawa Centre for bringing forward this private member's bill on escaping domestic violence.

I commend the member for bringing forth a bill on such a serious issue. Domestic violence is a serious issue. No one, whether it be a man, woman or child, should have to suffer violence at home. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual and psychological in form and has wide-reaching effects on its victim. The trauma of the abuse affects many aspects of a victim's life and can leave them with lasting emotional and sometimes physical scars. Incidents of domestic violence are also rarely an isolated occurrence, but are perpetuated again and again.

It is alarming how widespread the occurrence of domestic violence is in Canada. According to the Canadian Women's Foundation, half of Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16. One to two women are murdered by a current or former partner each week in Canada. These statistics are startling.

The member from Ottawa Centre has rightly pointed out the barriers faced by victims of domestic violence. More often than not, victims of domestic violence do not speak out. According to the Canadian Women's Foundation in 2004, less than 36% of female victims of abuse report these crimes to the police.

Often, people wonder how it can be so difficult for a victim to remove themselves from an abusive situation, but the barriers are real. Leaving a violent relationship is a very dangerous time for a victim of abuse. Victims fear for their safety and the safety of their children, often fearing the possibility of retaliation for leaving. Victims of domestic abuse may also feel ashamed or embarrassed, or fear being stigmatized if they reveal the realities of their situation. And, as rightly pointed out by the member from Ottawa Centre, victims often lack resources or supports needed to be able to leave the home.

Bill 53 points to the barriers that rental agreements pose by requiring a tenant to provide no less than 60 days' notice to the landlord to terminate a lease. Rental agreements can force the victim of abuse to incur added costs in leaving. The intentions of Bill 53 are certainly good. As we have discussed, we must do all that we can to eliminate barriers faced by victims of domestic abuse. We must empower victims, providing them with the social supports they need to have.

I just want to finish off by saying that I'd like to thank the member for bringing this forward. I understand there are some issues with it, as far as our concerns around the landlord itself. But I think it opens up a good discussion, and I think that any time you bring the words "domestic violence" to this Legislature, you understand that there is a problem today in this country, in this province and in some of our communities and that it's a good thing to discuss. The intention, of course, is to stop domestic violence once and for all. Thank you to the member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: It's my pleasure, this afternoon, to rise in support of Bill 53, an act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, and to be part of the discussion this afternoon. I find myself quite loquacious this afternoon, so I will leave some time for the member for Toronto Centre.

I did want to, though, begin by commending the member for Ottawa Centre. He has worked tirelessly. His efforts have been endless in working towards safer, healthier communities. He has worked personally with the Waterloo Community Safety and Crime Prevention Council and directly with the manager, Christiane Sadeler. I spent 12 years on that council; I'm extremely familiar with them, but the whole focus is that they are part of a broader national strategy to prevent crime by changing social situations out of which crime arises, and

this is exactly what the member for Ottawa Centre is doing here today by bringing forward Bill 53.

I also had the opportunity to be the parliamentary assistant for women's issues. Domestic violence, sexual abuse: This was all part of a portfolio that I had for two years, and I got to see first-hand, across the province, personal stories and experiences that move us to a place where we realize that non-action is not possible. So this action today is a positive step forward.

We know that victims of domestic violence are faced with a very small window of opportunity to flee, to escape, and there should be no barrier to that, the very least of which should be a lease. They must be able to flee dangerous situations without any added financial or administrative obstacles. I wanted to focus on the effect that this has on our youth. If a child is in a family, whatever the family structure might be, and the parent needs to flee an abusive situation and can't because of a lease, and they don't have the means by which to remove themselves from that abusive situation, the effects on the youth are astounding. I would refer you to the Review of the Roots of Youth Violence that was put out by the Honourable Roy McMurtry and Dr. Alvin Curling. What they do in that study is they go through, at length, the effects that this particular issue has on our youth.

The report states that while "most families provide secure and safe places for children to grow and learn, many do not."

"A severely troubled home life can have a damaging affect on the youth's interest in school, ability to learn, and interactions with peers and teachers." They make a very interesting comment. They say that "children succeed when they are safe." This bill today by the member from Ottawa Centre, Bill 53, is another step forward to help ensure that students, children and youth can live in that safe place because parents are not beholden to stay in a difficult or a dangerous situation. It takes an enormous amount of courage on the part of the victim to leave an abusive situation. So I would encourage all of us to support this because what the member from Ottawa Centre is doing is opening the door and allowing the opportunity for the victim to leave the abusive situation, which has a huge ripple effect on the immediate family and the entire community.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: It's a great honour to participate in a very elevated debate. I was particularly inspired by my colleague from Parkdale—High Park's comments because I think she put context very much from a woman's perspective behind this issue.

The economic inequality between women—especially the women in newcomer communities, who do not have the means and often don't have access to their own savings account. Any significant amount of rent money is an enormous barrier to overcome.

I'm also very impressed that this is coming from my colleague and friend from Ottawa Centre, a younger

member of this Legislature who lives in a very real and sensitive world around the needs of women and recognizes that more than many men. It surprised me that no one has spoken to what the core problem is here. The core problem isn't women. The core problem is men.

Domestic violence is a bit of a misnomer because 99% of violence is done by men. I'd like to take a moment and speak to all my male colleagues in this House, because I think it's important that we, as men, own our own culture and own and recognize that we live in a society that enables male violence. I don't mean to suggest that biologically men somehow are more prone to violence than others, but I have to tell you, growing up as a gay man, it wasn't being gay that was the issue. It was being a sissy. To avoid being beaten up in high school by other men. I became captain of the football team, I became very athletic. As a matter of fact, I became a student of masculinity in a way that most of my straight male friends hadn't. I learned very quickly that if you were tough, strong, didn't express emotion, were never vulnerable, took control of situations rather than express feelings, people thought you were straight. As a matter of fact, when I told my father I was gay, he told me I couldn't be gay because I played football. Had I been a hairdresser or a stylist, I think he probably would have assumed differently. I notice many members are smiling because there's a certain amount of humour to that.

There's a rally being proposed for extreme fighting. We live in a culture where we don't give men opportunities to express vulnerability—certainly not to the women they love. We live in a culture that has so hypermasculinized men and associated us with violence, and now we send young men to war. There is too much in our culture that idealizes that. It's often said that strength in its greatest form is gentleness and that gentleness only occurs when men are actually strong, that it is only men who are not strong who cannot be gentle.

I think that until we, as men, own our own capacity for violence, that until each and every one of us are able to stand in this House and acknowledge that we are products of a culture that has not left us with the fullness of emotions and sensitivity to actually express ourselves in ways with emotions other than anger and control, we are going to continue to put the women we love and those we don't know at risk. There is no amount of government money that's ever going to build enough shelters until men and our culture mend.

I would ask some of you who are straight, who are middle-aged and married, who come from rural communities, who would be less suspect if you made these kinds of speeches, to stand up and stand by the women you know and help us put an end to the violence shown by changing the culture and allow men to resort to more healthy solutions to their displeasure and frustration.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Naqvi has two minutes for his response.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Let me first start by thanking the members from Oxford, Parkdale-High Park, Guelph,

Simcoe North, Kitchener-Conestoga and Toronto Centre for their expression of support for Bill 53. I also thank you very much for some very constructive suggestions as to how, by working together, we can strengthen this bill.

I think all of us raised a point that violence against women or domestic violence is a very large issue. I agree with you that it is definitely beyond the scope of this one particular bill. Nor is this bill intending to address the very big societal issue around domestic violence in our communities. I wish I had the prescription for that. I wish all of us collectively had the prescription for that. Unfortunately, we don't, for many reasons that have been outlined by other members.

1610

This particular bill is trying to address a very specific, focused, narrow issue that relates to domestic violence and residential tenancies. We know that a lot of people, especially a lot of women who are financially independent, live in rental apartments. We know-and I think there's an acknowledgment by everyone—that there is a discrepancy that exists, a disconnect that exists between policy and what the Residential Tenancies Act allows us to do. Through this bill, at the behest of my constituents who brought this issue to me-and I'm sure there are many more who have not had the courage or the means to speak to me or you. Through Bill 53, I'm trying to rectify it, making it easier, reducing that one very important barrier by which a victim of domestic violence could escape an abusive relationship, an abusive situation, and flee to safety. If we can help one person, that's one more person we have helped to get away from a domestic violence situation.

I thank you very much for your support this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time provided for private members' public business has expired. I will ask members to please take their seats.

RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS FOR EMPLOYEES AND SELF-EMPLOYED PERSONS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LES RÉGIMES D'ÉPARGNE-RETRAITE DES EMPLOYÉS ET DES TRAVAILLEURS INDÉPENDANTS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will first deal with ballot item number 19, standing in the name of Mr. Leal.

Mr. Leal has moved second reading of Bill 54, An Act respecting retirement savings plans for employees and for self-employed persons. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We'll call in the members after the next couple of ballot items.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with ballot item number 20.

Mrs. Sandals has moved private members' notice of motion number 31. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ESCAPING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA FUITE FACE À LA VIOLENCE FAMILIALE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with ballot item number 21, standing in the name of Mr. Naqvi.

Mr. Naqvi has moved second reading of Bill 53, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 with respect to domestic violence. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Naqvi? Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I move that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): So ordered. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell. The division bells rang from 1613 to 1618.

RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS FOR EMPLOYEES AND SELF-EMPLOYED PERSONS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LES RÉGIMES D'ÉPARGNE-RETRAITE DES EMPLOYÉS ET DES TRAVAILLEURS INDÉPENDANTS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Leal has moved second reading of Bill 54.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura Arthurs, Wayne Balkissoon, Bas Best, Margarett Brownell, Jim Delaney, Bob Dhillon, Vic Dunlop, Garfield Flynn, Kevin Daniel Fonseca, Peter Hardeman, Ernie Kular, Kuldip Leal, Jeff Levac, Dave Miller, Norm Murray, Glen R. Naqvi, Yasir Pendergast, Leeanna Qaadri, Shafiq Ramal, Khalil Ruprecht, Tony Sandals, Liz Sergio, Mario Sousa, Charles Takhar, Harinder S. Van Bommel, Maria Wynne, Kathleen O.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

DiNovo, Cheri Hampton, Howard Kormos, Peter Marchese, Rosario Prue, Michael Tabuns, Peter The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 27; the nays are 6.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I'd ask that this bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): So ordered.

All matters pertaining to private members' public business having been completed, I do now call orders of the day.

Hon. Margarett R. Best: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1620.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud– Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington-Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering-Scarborough East / Pickering-Scarborough-Est	**
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia-Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough-Rouge River	
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Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
20100;; 11010; 2 1010 011100p101 (222)		Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margarett R. (LIB)	Scarborough-Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
		Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma-Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham-Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	-
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
		Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax-Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward-Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor-Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de
		gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
		Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby-Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
lynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville /	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
	Mississauga-Est-Cooksville	Number of Dabout / Ministre du Travair
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / Thunder Bay-Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre de Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora-Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	**
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu
ion water, marca (1121)	Transfer Control Transfer Control	Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires
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Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham-Kent-Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West-Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest-Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
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aczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges-Markham	NOT
effrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton-Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
ohnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock	
ones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin-Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket-Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea-Gore-Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
eal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
evac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean-Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity-Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et de Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre
· ·		Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough- Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa-Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa-Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée
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Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et d'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la
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Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron-Bruce	Formation et des Collèges et Universités Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Député(e) et parti Circonscription Autres responsabilités	
Murdoch, Bill (PC) Murray, Glen R (LIB) Naqvi, Yasir (LIB) O'Toole, John (PC) Orazietti, David (LIB) Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB) Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB) Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB) Prue, Michael (NDP) Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB) Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Rived-Grey-Owen Sound Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de législative Idégislative Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de législative Outuar Centre / Ottawa-Centre Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Ottawa	hole House /
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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

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Monday 17 May 2010

Lundi 17 mai 2010



Speaker Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk Deborah Deller Président L'honorable Steve Peters

Greffière Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 17 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 17 mai 2010

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for personal thought and inner reflection.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I would like members of the Legislature to join me, along with page Michelle Lutsch, in welcoming her mother, Pauline; her father, Mike; and her aunt Grace McCann, sitting in the east members' gallery.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I want to introduce the family of page Tristen Groves: mother, Victoria Lavine-Groves, and family friend Alon Blumberger. They're here for the day.

I also want to introduce a whole group of transactivists, here for anti-homophobia day and to support Toby's Act, from the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, CUPE, the Canadian Federation of Students, CUPW, Trans Health, the Trans PULSE Project, Egale, Rainbow Health and many others. They will be arriving as we continue.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Joining us today are people from the York Region Children's Aid Society—from the board, Denise Bilsland; Rev. M.J. Perry; Avanthi Goddard; Sophia Wong; Ginger Beard-Martin; Patrick Lake, executive director; and Jennifer Grant.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'd like to welcome Mary Beth Caliciuri and her son Anthony. Many will remember that Anthony was a page here not that long ago. He's obviously missing the place, and we're happy to have him back.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'd like to welcome to the House today Suzanne Geoffrion and Sylvie Powell from the Lanark children's aid society, who have been here today.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I would like to welcome to the Legislature today the Rainbow Health Network, who are here to support and celebrate International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia—Georgina Bencsik; Swami Bodhidharma; Susan Gapka, whom I'd like to recognize for her outstanding leadership; Martine Stonehouse; Jake Pyne; Nicole Nussbaum; and Stefonknee Wolscht.

I'd also like to recognize, in the gallery, Ronald Lwabaayi and Todd Ross from Africans in Partnership Against Aids, who are fighting homophobia in Uganda.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'd like to welcome, from the Kingston children's aid society, Ray Muldoon, the executive director; Brian Devlin, the president or chair of the board; and another board member, Yvonne Cooper.

Mr. Steve Clark: I am pleased to introduce, from Family and Children's Services of Leeds and Grenville, Bob Pickens and Tim Blake. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I'm really pleased to introduce the family of my good friend Susanne Sviergula. Please welcome Carolann Perron, Janel Perron and Zach Perron. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'm pleased to welcome Nick Dzudz from Windsor, former president of the CAW, GM local, particularly appropriate today, the day the company has returned to profitability. Welcome.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I would like to welcome Chris Friesen, the president of the Oxford children's aid society, and Bruce Burbank, who is the executive director of the Oxford children's aid society. They're here again to celebrate with us today.

Mr. Mike Colle: I have the delegation from the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards. With us today we have Henry Jensen, Kevin Eccles, Bob Maich, Doug Martin, Mike Fenchak, Don Smith, George Braithwaite, Nick Dzudz, Rayudu Koka, Bill Clancey, Sue Petkovsek, Kathy Wallace, Fred Kaustinen and Alok Mukherjee.

Mr. Charles Sousa: I'd like to introduce, in the members' east gallery, two individuals who participated in Full Circle to help children in our community participate in the Mississauga Waterfront Festival. Please welcome to the Legislative Assembly Bill Mahood and Robbie Moyles. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I would like to introduce, in the west members' gallery, the friends and family of our page from Burlington, Dylan Thompson: his mom, Lisa-Marie Pharand; Carol-Anne Aulenbeck and James Kubik, his grandparents; and James Hanian, a family friend.

Hon. Carol Mitchell: It's my pleasure to introduce Carolynne Griffith, the chair of Egg Farmers of Ontario; Bill Emmott, the chair of Dairy Farmers of Ontario; Amy Cronin and Teresa Van Raay, directors of Ontario Pork; Brian Gilroy, chair of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association; and Murray Opsteen and Henry Zantingh, directors from Chicken Farmers of Ontario.

I want to encourage all members to come out to the farmers' market from 12 to 2 for good food that is grown in Ontario. They're not with us, but they will be with us shortly. Welcome, everyone.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I'd like to introduce guests who are from the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society: Bill Bevan, the executive director; Jamie Henderson, a board member of the agency; and Tina Gatt, manager of public relations, or PR, and prevention.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: It's my pleasure to acknowledge the leadership of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, who have joined us here today, and the many CASs who have joined us. You might have noticed a theme in the introductions of CASs today. It is the OACAS lobby day, and we're very pleased that they're here.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: From my riding, and representing children's aid societies—Peel CAS—the executive director, Paul Zarnke; and from Dufferin Child and Family Services, it's my pleasure to welcome Trish Keachie.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I'd like to introduce a good friend and a great community volunteer in the name of Mike Fenchak, who's here from the Lakeshore police services board.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'd like to welcome members of the Ontario Biodiversity Council, who released their first state of Ontario's biodiversity report this morning with me. Joining us today in Queen's Park is Jon Grant, the chair; Julie Cayley, from Ducks Unlimited Canada; Dan Kraus, from the Nature Conservancy of Canada; Mark Stabb, from the Nature Conservancy of Canada; Steve Hounsell, of Ontario Power Generation; Terry Rees, from the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association; Don Pearson, of Conservation Ontario; and Don McCabe, of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I would like to introduce Joe Varner, who is the partner of my seatmate, Lisa MacLeod. I'd like to welcome him to Queen's Park today.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: On behalf of my London colleagues, I welcome Jane Fitzgerald and the London children's aid society to Queen's Park.

Also, on behalf of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, I acknowledge the presence today of the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards.

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to extend a special invitation to M.J. Perry, from York region, who sits on the York Region Children's Aid Society board. I'll be meeting with her and representatives later on. We thank them for the good work they do, and we hope that the government hears them loudly and clearly today.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Il me fait plaisir de présenter M^{me} Colette Prévost de la société d'aide à l'enfance de Sudbury—the children's aid society, where she's the executive director—as well as Ashley Thomson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Guelph and page Rhett Figliuzzi, to welcome his mother, Cheryl Figliuzzi, in the gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Seated in the Speaker's gallery from Family and Children's Services of St. Thomas and Elgin County, I'd like

to welcome Executive Director Rod Potgieter, board of directors Vice-President Jeff Addley, board of directors member Cheryl Fish and director of services Dawn Flegel. Welcome to Queen's Park.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Mr. Peter Kormos: On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the member from Welland. He provided me with proper notice.

The member from Welland.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Amongst other things, I'm going to be referring to a number of news clippings. If a page would come and take these to the table, we'll know we're all reading from the same book. Thank you kindly.

Speaker, with great hesitation, I rise on this point of privilege, because I very strongly believe that we have been witness to acts and conduct that constitute contempt of Parliament by the government and by its House leader. These relate to numerous statements attributed to the government and to the government House leader in a number of press articles—I'm speaking at this point only to the printed press; I can't speak to electronic media, because I simply haven't researched that yet.

We start with May 15, a Canadian Press article coming out of Collingwood. Of course, it's around the issue of the tripartite ad hoc committee of this Parliament that was charged with the selection of an Ombudsman, the term of office of the current Ombudsman having expired.

I refer to the very final paragraphs of that Canadian Press article: "But the panel charged with hiring an Ombudsman was unable to reach a consensus, and a new committee will have to be formed, said government House leader Monique Smith."

Further, "About 50 people applied for the job, but most were unsuitable for the job and only four people were interviewed, the government said."

I turn to the item by Command News dated Sunday, May 16. There, toward the end of that article, "The Ombudsman committee couldn't agree on whom to hire, which means the process must start again with a new panel, said government House leader Monique Smith.

"About 50 people applied for the job, but most were deemed unsuitable and only four candidates were interviewed, including Marin, according to government officials."

"Smith said she's asked Speaker Steve Peters to form a new committee and post the job again."

Now, these are direct quotes: "My understanding was that our first posting was only in one newspaper and it was only about a week of time,' she said.

"So I've asked that we post it more broadly and for a more extended period of time to allow for more interest."

Ottawa Citizen article, May 14, 2010, by Lee Greenberg, referring to Marin:

"Government insiders are sniping at Marin's financial management of his office, noting particularly the decision to relocate from one downtown Toronto address to another.

"The move involved extensive renovations, one Liberal said. The Liberals also suggest Marin is claiming frequent travel to his Ottawa home as a work expense."

I simply want to put those in the context of my point of privilege. These are scurrilous, malicious and, with all due respect, slanderous, and they are not unattributed statements; they are attributed to "one Liberal said" and government insiders.

Further in that same Ottawa Citizen article:

"Despite Marin's expectations to be considered for the job, government House leader Monique Smith told the Citizen she asked Speaker Steve Peters to strike another panel and begin a new search for candidates.

"The Speaker wrote to us and told us that the panel didn't come to a conclusion so I suggested he convene a new panel and post the job again,' Smith said.

"There may be different candidates that bring different things to the table."

Ottawa Citizen again, Greenberg writing on May 15,

2010, repeating the same two comments:

"Government insiders are sniping at Marin's financial management of his office, noting particularly the decision to relocate from one downtown Toronto address to another

"The move involved extensive renovations, one Liberal said. The Liberals also suggest Marin is claiming frequent travel to his Ottawa home as a work expense."

May 15, 2010, Toronto Star—and again, this is obviously utilizing the Canadian Press story that I referred to earlier:

"But the panel charged with hiring an Ombudsman was unable to reach a consensus, and a new committee will have to be formed, said government house leader Monique Smith....

"About 50 people applied for the job, but most were unsuitable for the job and only four people were interviewed, the government said."

The Globe and Mail, Sunday, May 16, by Maria Babbage for the Canadian Press: "And now there are reports of Liberal grumblings about Marin's expenses, including complaints that he's claiming frequent travel to his Ottawa home and made extensive renovations to his new office."

I say to you that these are scurrilous, malicious and slanderous comments.

Further, the final paragraph of that article as published: "About 50 people applied for the job, but most were unsuitable for the job and only four people were interviewed, the government said."

Finally, the Globe and Mail, May 16, 2010, Karen Howlett, halfway through the article titled "Search Continues for Next Ontario Ombudsman":

"Liberal House leader Monique Smith said in an interview on Sunday that she had heard anecdotally that individuals who wanted to apply for the job did not realize

it had been posted until after the deadline for applications. The job was advertised in only one newspaper for one or two days, she said. Ms. Smith plans to ask Speaker Steve Peters to appoint a new search committee and to instruct the committee to advertise the job opening more broadly.

"According to the unnamed government official, about 50 people applied for the job in the first round but only four were interviewed, including Mr. Marin. Another was former Liberal MP Susan Whelan, but Ms. Smith denied that she was the Liberals' choice for Ombudsman."

Those are the media references that I rely upon.

There are two issues here. One is with respect to in camera proceedings. The literature and the reference material is rife with commentary on this. I refer to Parliamentary Privilege in Canada, second edition, Maingot, page 249. "Unlike secret sessions, the purpose of which is to keep matters secret, in camera proceedings are held to enable members to feel free to discuss and deliberate, and particularly to enable them to reach a decision by means of compromise without the glare of publicity and, unless it is alleged that a particular person gave the in camera proceedings to the press or some other misconduct is alleged specifically, a Speaker will be reluctant to find a prima facie case of privilege."

1050

Well, sir, I am alleging that the contents of an in camera process were given to the press. I believe that that record is apparent.

I go back to Bourinot, and I'm referring to the third edition, published 1903, page 153: "It is an old order of Parliament 'that the evidence taken by any select committee of this House, and the documents presented to such committee, and which have not been reported to the House, ought not to be published by any member of that committee or by any other person."

I appreciate that the reference there, like the reference in O'Brien and Bosc, is to select committees, but the broader rule and the reason why we're referring to select committees as compared to standing committees is for the obvious reason that standing committees are in and of themselves inherently public but for the rare time when the standing orders provide for in camera portions.

The hiring or the selection committee, in my respectful submission to you, sir, although not designed by the standing orders, was a committee of this House, a committee of this Parliament, to which all three caucuses, all three House leaders, all three party leaders agreed. It deserves the same protection as any other committee. It wasn't functioning in a partisan way; it was designed to function in a non-partisan way. That was the agreement. The agreement at the onset of the hearings, and Speaker, of course you were present at those, was that the subject matter of those proceedings would be confidential. There was some question about whether they were privileged at law and could people be subpoenaed to testify as to what happened in that committee, and there was a suggestion that should there be civil litigation flowing out of the

process, those members might well not be able to claim privilege, but we committed ourselves to confidentiality.

Erskine May, page 139, the 23rd edition: "As early as the mid-seventeenth century, it was declared to be against the custom of Parliament for any act done at a committee to be divulged before it being reported to the House. Subsequently, though the House of Commons found it increasingly difficult to enforce effectively its rules against the disclosure abroad of proceedings in the chamber, the privacy of committee proceedings and the prior right of the House itself to a committee's conclusions was upheld, and punishment was inflicted on a newspaper proprietor who published the contents of a draft report laid before a select committee but not considered by it or presented to the House."

Finally, in O'Brien and Bosc, and this is a very—look, I'm not suggesting that, should there be a finding of contempt here, anybody be sent to the Tower.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's tempting.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Well, some of the older reference books make frequent reference to people being committed to the Tower until they're kneeling at the bar of Parliament, submitting their apologies. I'm not suggesting that.

As a matter of fact, this is an interesting observation in O'Brien and Bosc, page 87: "The reluctance to invoke the House's authority to reprimand or admonish anyone found to have trampled its dignity or authority and that of its members appears to have become a near constant feature of the Canadian approach to privilege." Here's where an ellipsis would be appropriate. Later in that paragraph: "In the 1987 Parry case where the member divulged the result of an in camera vote, the Standing Committee on Elections, Privilege and Procedure also did not recommend punishment, and the member's apology to the House put an end to the matter."

I cite that because, again, it's clear that that conduct doesn't necessarily—doesn't necessarily—compel punishment. But it's equally clear from the reference to the Parry case in Ottawa that it is a breach of privilege and it is a contempt of Parliament.

That's dealing with the disclosure, I put to you, of the subject matter and process in that confidential ad hoc committee, which, in my respectful submission, for the purpose of determining privilege has the same status as a select committee referred to. Indeed, the older literature simply refers to any committee of a Parliament, and that was a committee of the Parliament; I don't think there can be any dispute about that.

O'Brien and Bosc, in listing on page 84 those things that will constitute a contempt, include "divulging or publishing the content of any report or evidence of a select committee before it has been reported to the House."

I then go to what I have identified in my submission as scurrilous, malicious slanders against Mr. Marin. Referring once again to Maingot, page 250, "There are actions that, while not directly in a physical way obstructing the House of Commons or the member, nevertheless obstruct

the House in the performance of its functions by diminishing the respect due it." Mr. Marin is an officer of this assembly, as are you, sir, as is the Clerk, along with several other positions. A slander, I put to you, of an officer of this assembly has specifically the result of diminishing the respect due to this Parliament—even more regrettably, a slanderous statement where the subject matter of that, an esteemed officer of this assembly, is not given an opportunity to respond.

In fact, Maingot finds that "Contempt is whatever a House finds as contempt"—page 229; we've reviewed this before: "Another category relates to matters of contempt that are not a breach of any enumerated right. Because the House of Commons has the penal right of the old high court of Parliament, it has the right to find a person in contempt for 'disrespect to that which is entitled to legal regard.' And, like contempt of court, 'it is so manifold in its aspects that it is difficult to lay down any exact definition of the offence."

It goes on and refers to things being treated as a contempt, even though there is no precedent for the offence. I again refer you to O'Brien and Bosc, page 82. "Privilege Versus Contempt" is the subheading: "The House also claims the right to punish, as a contempt, any action which, though not a breach of a specific privilege, tends to obstruct or impede the House in the performance of its functions, obstructs or impedes any member or officer of the House in the discharge of their duties; or is an offence against the authority or dignity of the House, such as disobedience of its legitimate commands or libels upon itself, its members, or its officers." Mr. Marin is an officer of this Assembly and he has been the victim of a libel, I say to you.

I note, in reference to declining to ask the Speaker or the chamber to send anybody to the Tower, Bourinot. Again in that 1903 third edition that I referred to earlier, "A contempt of the privileges of the House will be punished according to its character"—page 158. "In some cases the House will not deem it necessary to proceed beyond an admonition or a reprimand, but occasions may arise hereafter, as in the past, when it will be found necessary to resort to the extreme measure of imprisonment." So this is a very serious matter.

We had a confidential selection process that was consistent with good human resources practices—best practices, if you will. All three caucuses were represented on that committee. When decisions were made, they were only made as a result of unanimity. For the government House leader to criticize that committee's decision, for instance, about advertising an open position, when her own member, who was a delegate of her leader, was speaking for her leader and her caucus at that committee and acquiesced to that, I find disingenuous. For the government House leader to regrettably divulge information that was to be kept confidential and had been kept confidential-and I'm well aware of your letter. I received your letter. I received Ms. Smith's letter of May 14 and I trust that by now you've received my letter of May 14. This is with respect to where the select committee goes next. I will not divulge the contents of those letters. They've either been read by you or they're in your mailboxes.

1100

I just find this an extremely troubling thing, when a process like this—it has to be kept pristine. We're hiring an officer of the assembly. We've made great progress in the last 15 years in ensuring that officers of the assembly have the support of all three caucuses. We've aspired towards unanimity to depoliticize that position, as it must be.

I regret, sir, that—it's my view—some of the indiscretions and comments that have been published, comments by Ms. Smith or by the government, Liberal insiders, government insiders, identified as such and who obviously identified themselves as such, detract from that process and, again, very much politicize it. I also regret that in the course of doing that, an esteemed officer of this assembly has been libelled, slandered. The sad thing about libel and slander is that all the apologies in the world, all the corrections in the world, even should one choose to litigate all of the awards in the world, never take away that blemish, that scarlet letter that is wrongly attached to that victim of slander and libel.

I leave this in your hands, sir. I don't want to belabour the point any further. I appreciate your patience in a serious matter that I believe has to be approached in a very serious way by all of us here in this assembly.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke on the same point of privilege.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I rise in support of my colleague from Welland in his registering of this point of privilege here in the Legislature today.

While I don't need to go through all of the media reports, I share and agree with him that everything he has stated in those are written in this package that I have as well. It began with a story written by Adam Radwanski on Friday, in which the contents of your letter to House leaders was divulged. The result of that, predictably, was a frenzied attempt on the part of the media to get to the bottom of this issue, which proceeded to continue through the weekend.

This issue of a point of privilege seems to be a habit that has developed on the part of this government, a habit of obstruction and arrogance and cynicism that has emerged. Earlier in this session you found a prima facie breach of privilege in the obstruction of the PC caucus on their way to the Legislature to listen to the budget presentation. Hearings into this case will once again take place this Wednesday. While members of the government scoff at the hearings, the significance of such a decision has not been lost on the members on this side of the House.

Only 15 times in the history of this province has a Speaker found a prima facie case of breach of privilege, and your order on the budget day obstruction was that number—15. Additionally, you ordered a standing committee to look into the alleged breach of privilege when the government broke its own law when it cancelled a

review of the unelected and unaccountable LHINs. Now the member from Welland presents a case supported by House of Commons Procedure and Practice, second edition, page 83, referring to a contempt of Parliament.

What the government has done offends at least two identifiable cases of contempt. The first is interfering with or obstructing a person who is carrying out a lawful order of the House. As a legislative officer, the Ombudsman is doing exactly that. The attempt on the part of this government, through unidentified spokespersons or unidentified insiders, as they're quoted as identifying themselves—clearly they cannot hide behind that. Every member on the opposite side of this House knows that no one there so much as blows their nose without the consent of the Premier's office, and if Liberal insiders are giving quotes to the newspapers on matters as sensitive as the appointment, the reappointment or the process involving the appointment of the Ombudsman, you know they have the blessing of the power in the Premier's office. And then the Premier stands and defends the Ombudsman and says lovely things—well, we know that you have to be taken for your actions, not your words.

What has happened through the course of the weekend: divulging the process, talking about the numbers of people who are interviewed, the advertisement process—and my friend talked about that. The advertisement for persons to apply to be the Ombudsman was agreed upon by the committee. That would be the process. The government appointee on that committee agreed to that. It would be a fair assumption that if 50 people applied for that position and the committee was able to narrow that down, then that process probably was sufficient. What would lead anyone to believe that a new process would produce any different results? We all know what Freud said about continuing to do the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

Hon. John Milloy: Einstein.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you for the correction. Yakabuski said it, too.

Anyway, this is clearly an attempt to indicate that there were flaws in the process, when the flaw is in the way that the government has treated the process, the way that they have disrespected the process and disrespected the members of that committee. By implying that restarting that process, and doing so in public, would somehow produce better candidates for the job—everyone in this province who wants to be the Ombudsman was well aware of the time of the expiration of his term and well aware that the government was putting out feelers looking for new candidates. Back in February, the Premier was on record in the press as having said, "We're looking for new officers," and indicating that he didn't think it was a good idea to be reappointing people to subsequent terms

Hon. James J. Bradley: Not automatically. Mr. John Yakabuski: Automatically—well.

The Premier already laid the groundwork for what the government is trying to do with respect to the Ombudsman. To then send out spokespeople to besmirch and

sully the reputation of an officer of this Legislature still acting as that officer—I think it is, quite frankly, unprecedented for the government to publicly try to harm his reputation, indicating, for example, that he was using his office to expense trips back home to Ottawa when in fact it's the Ombudsman Act that allows him to do just that, just as members of this Legislature are allowed to expense their trips home when they go back and forth to their ridings. Why you would do those kinds of things unless you're deliberately trying to harm the person—and that, I believe, not only insults in the most egregious way the Ombudsman, but it insults every member of this Legislature, as well.

So I agree with the member from Welland and his point of privilege, and we are looking forward to your ruling on this, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Government House leader?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to take up too much time. I simply wanted to say that I received a copy of the letter from the member from Welland regarding his point of privilege today at 10:15, and therefore did not have great opportunity to prepare for this point of privilege, so I look forward to providing you with written submissions in due course.

With respect to the process, I think it has been very clearly outlined. It is not set out in the Ombudsman Act what the process is for reappointment; simply that the Ombudsman shall be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the address of the assembly. We have set up a process through this Legislature, as you have as the Speaker, convening a panel of all three parties to review applicants and to make a recommendation.

1110

As you've noted in your letter to all of the House leaders on May 5, 2010, "A selection panel was named and charged with the recruitment"—

Mr. Peter Kormos: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No. I'll come back to the honourable member from Welland. I'd like to hear—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No, I'm going to let her continue.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: In the letter, Mr. Speaker, you advised that a consensus had not been reached by the selection panel. I would note for the member from Welland that the process was discussed in various media reports dating back to February 2004, including an article by Maria Babbage on February 24, 2010, where it was noted, "But it was Kormos's complaints over Cavoukian's reappointment that prompted a return to the competitive process that's been in place for years, said government House leader Monique Smith, who put the wheels in motion last week."

The member for Welland has, on numerous occasions, commented on the need for a process, a public process, an open process, and in fact, is quoted extensively in the media about this, particularly on May 27, 2009, when he

discussed his concern around the appointment of the privacy commissioner.

I would also note an op ed piece provided by the leader of the third party, his leader Andrea Horwath, on March 8, 2010, in the Toronto Star. She outlined, and this is the title, "How to Hire an Ombudsman." In the process of her article, she said, "Let's be clear. New Democrats have consistently called for an open competition for the appointment of officers of the Legislative Assembly, such as the Ombudsman and the environment commissioner, among others. Furthermore, as 'officers of the assembly,' these office-holders must have all-party support."

She goes on to say, "At the time of the privacy commissioner's reappointment, New Democrats raised concerns about the lack of transparency. A perusal through the record of debate at Queen's Park shows we aren't the only ones uncomfortable."

Then she goes on to say what she sees as the process. First, "the Ombudsman term should be fixed at 10 years.... instead of the current five.

"Second, there should be no reappointment. Once the 10 years are up"—and, "Third, the incumbent Ombudsman should automatically keep the job until the successor is" named.

There's been much discussion in the public domain about the appointment process. As early as February 24, we noted that an all-party committee was going to be named and convened, and the advertisement was posted.

With respect to my comments about how long the advertisement was posted, it's in the public record how long it was posted. You can check the papers for how long it was posted and how long the process was allowed to run. My comments were in no way, Mr. Speaker, a criticism of the committee or of your ability to run this process. I was simply indicating that I thought perhaps a longer process should be run in the second running of this competition.

With respect to the comments that the member for Welland has made with respect to contempt, I will address those in my written submissions. I do not believe that they are in any way relevant to this discussion of contempt of the Legislature. I believe that the member for Welland has taken the opportunity to go on at some length about things that he wanted to speak about in this Legislature but that are not relevant to the point of contempt or the point of privilege.

I would note, Mr. Speaker, that I did, in fact, send you a letter last week, advising that I felt there should be a new panel created, made up of appointments of all parties of the House, as we have in the past. I also noted that I suggested that the posting be made more broadly and for a longer period of time.

I take exception to the member for Welland indicating in his submissions this morning that I instructed you in any way. In fact, the quote was from the newspaper, that I had asked you, the Speaker, to appoint a new search committee and to instruct the committee to advise. In fact, I don't think in my letter I even asked you to instruct. That was perhaps some licence by the author of

the article, but I certainly in no way would ever assume to instruct you in your duties as Speaker.

We have followed an open and transparent process in this appointment. We continue to do so. There is no contempt of Parliament, nor is there a point of privilege that's been violated in this case. We continue to work in an open and transparent way.

I just want to end by saying that I am relieved to know that the member for Welland will not be seeking that I go

to the gallows should a contempt be found.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Welland.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I have no quarrel with the government House leader filing or tabling written arguments, but I would ask that we, the opposition House leaders, receive copies of them, and I would ask also that the Speaker consider giving us an opportunity to respond to them, should we deem it necessary.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I would ask that we receive a written submission from the member from Welland on his point of privilege this morning, as well as have an opportunity to respond to any further submissions that he

makes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the member from Welland, the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and the government House leader for their comments on this issue. I do welcome submissions from individuals to assist me in my deliberations, and I will reserve judgment at this time.

It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Acting Premier. Working Families is an American-style campaign organization set up for the sole purpose of stopping the Ontario PCs from forming government. They ran attack ads against PC candidates in each of the past two election campaigns. The front man of the Working Families Coalition is Patrick Dillon, whom Dalton McGuinty wants to appoint to the College of Trades Appointments Council tomorrow. Is the appointment a reward for helping the Liberals win the 2007 election campaign?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind the honourable member of impugning motive, and would ask her to withdraw that comment, please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Acting Premier.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Colleges, Training and Universities.

Hon. John Milloy: I'm very proud to stand in this House and talk about the government's initiative in putting forward a college of trades, a first of its kind in the world.

It's passing strange: The opposition are the ones who have been raising concerns about the apprenticeship system here in the province of Ontario. Our response was to ask a noted expert, Mr. Tim Armstrong, to look into the apprenticeship system, and he came forward with the proposal for a college of trades, an opportunity for everyone involved in the apprenticeship system to gather and to look at many of the issues that are facing the province.

We are taking the first steps, through an appointments council, which will form the basis of the college of trades, and the member is a member of the—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: To the Acting Premier: Tomorrow morning, the government agencies committee meets to consider whether Patrick Dillon should be given his newest appointment, but it's going to be hard to figure out how he will find the time, given that since the last election Dalton McGuinty has appointed Dillon to the board of Infrastructure Ontario and to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. Dillon gets \$550 a day for his appointment to the Infrastructure Ontario board and \$225 a day for his appointment to WSIB. How much more will Ontario families be forced to pay for this latest plum appointment of your Liberal attack dog?

Hon. John Milloy: The legislation establishing the college of trades has put together a council of nine individuals to do the preliminary work. I am very proud of the representatives on this council, who come from all aspects of the Ontario apprenticeship and training system. We have individuals who are involved in youth apprenticeship, people from the community college sector, people from the private sector. Yes, we have nominated Pat Dillon, who represents an important part of the apprenticeship training sector in this province.

The union and employer-union training sector punches far above its weight in terms of the amount of apprenticeship training that goes on, and we feel it is important to have their voice at the table when we talk about issues facing apprentices.

Since we've come to power, we have doubled the number of apprentices in the province of Ontario, from 60,000—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Back to the Acting Premier: Let's talk about Patrick Dillon. His experience on the WSIB hardly qualifies him for an appointment. Dillon signed off on hospitality, limousines and a GPS expense for former Liberal cabinet minister and current WSIB chair Steve Mahoney, but this is nothing compared to Dillon and Working Families spending \$7 million on anti-PC attack ads that effectively doubled the Liberal Party's ad purchase in the last two elections.

Why is Dalton McGuinty pushing for someone who breaks Ontario's election laws to have even more influence in their government?

1120

Hon. John Milloy: Expert after expert has told us that one of the greatest challenges facing Ontario is replacing the supply of skilled labourers. We took the initiative, the first jurisdiction in the country, to establish the college of trades. The college of trades is to be a clearing house where all voices will be heard. One of those important voices is unionized labour, which is responsible for a great deal of the apprenticeship training that goes on in the province of Ontario.

I make no apologies that we have a representative from the unionized sector who can talk about the experience there, who can talk about their successes and can meet with people from other sectors of the economy to talk about how we can have the strongest apprenticeship system in the country and how we can address the skills shortage that will be facing Ontario in the years to come.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Maybe the fourth time is the charm. To the Acting Premier: Dillon and Working Families have seen the inside of the Premier's office and those of senior McGuinty Liberal cabinet ministers. In June 2007, mere months before the provincial election, Dillon met with former Liberal campaign chair and finance minister Greg Sorbara in his ministerial boardroom. No notes were taken at the meeting, but weeks later, Dillon and Working Families released anti-PC attack ads that helped the Liberal election campaign.

Will you come clean and tell Ontario families and this House what was discussed at that meeting?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Members of the cabinet meet routinely with leaders of the union movement and leaders of the business community.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Paul Godfrey.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: For instance, my colleague reminds me, I had the good opportunity to appoint Paul Godfrey as the head of Ontario Lottery and Gaming, a very prominent Conservative. He is serving the province of Ontario very well.

Mr. Dillon serves the province very well. He is the elected leader of the building trades movement in Ontario. They are an important part of our economy.

We will continue to meet with the elected representatives, and we will continue to appoint people from across the political spectrum. We just reappointed Dave Cooke, for instance, to the Education Quality and Accountability Office. These are important appointments, and these—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It says something about Dalton McGuinty that he won't distance himself from the Working Families Coalition or Patrick Dillon. What's worse is that Mr. McGuinty is bringing the directing minds of the Working Families Coalition into his government. Dillon, the chief spokesman for Working Families, spent \$7 million on anti-PC attack ads, and the Premier wants to give him a third political appointment in just three years. To

date, Working Families has received \$29 million in tax-payer money.

So I ask you: What makes Dalton McGuinty think public appointments and taxpayer money can be handed to those who helped the Ontario Liberals overspend in election limits?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Perhaps it's the member's inexperience, but the first government that appointed Mr. Dillon was the previous Conservative government. I see the former Minister of Labour shaking her head in agreement. And by the way, you appointed him to the board of the WSIB.

I regret that this kind of question would be asked here and that the character of Mr. Dillon would be assailed in this fashion. I applaud the previous government for having appointed Mr. Dillon, recognizing his expertise in labour matters. We renewed his appointment. We have appointed Conservatives and appointed New Democrats. The sucking and blowing coming from over there is deafening.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The problem with the Acting Premier's answer is that no one believes you. Patrick Dillon had a secret meeting—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Acting Premier.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a question.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Finish your question.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Patrick Dillon had a secret meeting with your campaign chair. Dillon's pollster of choice is Don Guy, who conducted polling on the anti-PC attack ads during the last campaign while running the Liberal election campaign, and then he became Mr. McGuinty's chief of staff. The relationship is incestuous.

Is Patrick Dillon getting these political appointments as part of a deal to help you break Ontario's election laws?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. I'd ask the honourable member to withdraw that last comment, please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Acting Premier.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Dillon served on the WSIB from 1996. I would congratulate the former labour minister for appointing him.

The absolutely spurious comments that the member just withdrew are a real sham and reflect very badly on this House, particularly on the integrity of the questioning going on.

We will continue to make appointments like Mr. Dillon. Tonight, that member's party is having its big fundraiser. I note that her first comment was about Americanstyle politics, and I would also note that the folks behind

the Shoppers Drug Mart—or one of the individuals behind that is a campaign manager for the Leader of the Opposition. I just think that the utter hypocrisy speaks very poorly of that caucus, of the double standard that they—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Economic Development; Minister of Municipal Affairs; Minister of Agriculture; Government House leader.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I believe that one was the member from Willowdale.

The member from Oxford is not being helpful, either.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You're doing well on voice recognition.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I could close my eyes and tell who is speaking. The sad part is, it's only a few of them. Some voices I wouldn't recognize because I don't hear them.

New question.

RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre adjoint. In April 2009, we had a huge demonstration right here on the lawn at Queen's Park. People were protesting cuts to rural hospitals. The government responded to this outcry by announcing the rural and northern health care panel. The citizens had been heard, or so we thought. It took until June before the members were appointed and October before we saw the mandate of the panel. But what a shock: Their mandate did not include hospitals. So 13 months later, what have we got? A largely inactive rural panel which has not yet held a single public, open consultation. Why is rural health such a low priority for the McGuinty government?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Health.
1130

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The guiding principle for our government is that Ontarians should have access to the finest possible health care, no matter where they live in this province. But there's no question about it: People who live in rural and northern parts of this province do face different challenges when it comes to accessing that very fine health care system. We are absolutely committed to making the kinds of changes to our health care system so that all Ontarians do have access to that very, very fine care.

That's why we have created the northern and rural panel. I look forward to their recommendations. They have done some very good groundwork, but it's just the beginning of the conversation. As we move forward, we will be going to public consultations, where we will make some very important refinements to our health care system so that people do get that health care.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary? M^{me} France Gélinas: The government has the resources to conduct wide consultations throughout rural and northern Ontario.

But here's what people have to say about the existing panel: "The government's rural and northern panel has refused to meet with local stakeholder groups and" is "conducting its review behind closed doors. No patient advocates, public interest groups and local community groups have been allowed to meet with the panel."

The Ontario Health Coalition stepped up to the plate. They got a seven-member panel together, organized 12 public meetings, listened to 1,150 residents and received

and reviewed 487 submissions.

My question is simple: Why has the McGuinty government not directed its appointed expert panel on rural and northern health care to hold any public consultations?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very happy to have the opportunity to clarify what the process is when it comes to the rural and northern panel on health care.

The first phase is the phase that is coming to a close, and that is where we are consulting on the five big questions facing northern and rural health care. The next phase is a broad public consultation, community consultations. The third stage is the development of that provincial framework.

I do know that the member opposite is anxious for this process to unfold, as are we. We are committed to providing the best possible health care to all Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It has been 13 months, and we are no further ahead. There are still cuts happening in rural and northern Ontario, and there's no end in sight.

I want to congratulate the Ontario Health Coalition for its work, for giving a voice to the people in rural and northern communities who are worried about their health services. Today they will be presenting their full report. I had the privilege to participate in the hearings, and even I was shocked by the horror stories that I heard in community after community.

Why is rural health not a priority? When is the minister going to take concrete action to bring access, equity and democracy to rural and northern health care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I have to take exception to the assertion of the member opposite that this is not a priority for our government. It absolutely is a priority. We have made significant investments in rural Ontario. If you look at the family health teams that have been created across the province in our rural areas, they are making a profound difference for people in those communities. Last week, we announced the next wave of proposals for nurse practitioner-led clinics; again, a remarkably fine innovation in the establishment of clinics that will serve people, particularly in communities where the need is the greatest.

We will continue to work to improve care for people in rural and northern Ontario.

RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est encore pour le premier ministre adjoint.

The Ontario Health Coalition travelled to 12 communities and heard from the people about their experiences, something that the government, so far, has refused to do.

I remember hearing from the family of Reilly Anzovino. This young woman tragically died in a car accident this winter. The crash occurred four kilometres away from the closed Fort Erie hospital emergency department. Reilly died before she got to the next hospital, and now the coroner is investigating.

I remember Fran Renoy in Picton, who documented how her local hospital has systematically been stripped of services since being amalgamated.

Why is the McGuinty government not seeking input from residents in rural areas? Why does the McGuinty government not seem to care about the experiences of Ontarians who live—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Acting Premier?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Maybe I will repeat the answer to the earlier question: The rural and northern panel is in the first phase of the development of a strategy to address rural and northern health challenges—the first stage. The second stage will involve that kind of broad consultation.

This is very important work. It's important that we get the perspective of the entire spectrum of people who have part of the solution and who have had part of the experiences that the member opposite has spoken about.

I look forward to receiving the report of the Ontario Health Coalition. I understand that it was distributed to some, but not to me, so I look forward to getting that report. I will take it very seriously, and I look forward to the continuation of our process in developing northern and rural health policies.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Can I repeat that it has been 13 months and we have seen nada? In Desbarats and St. Joseph Island, the panel heard from Bill Wallace and Diana Rose. They explained that the local hospital is vital to the economic and social development of the island and surrounding communities. People have chosen to retire here because there is a hospital. It is vital also for young families with children or people with health problems. Tourists who flock to the island in the summer need access to hospital services. In general, the hospital is seen as security, critical for health care and extremely important in the maintenance and improvement of the social and economic development of the island.

Minister, why is your panel not talking to the people of St. Joseph Island, whose hospital is being threatened, 13 months after the fact?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: This gives me an opportunity to talk about one of the very important initiatives that we have undertaken that will really make a difference for people in rural and underserviced areas. The NRRR program, the northern and rural retention program, will greatly enhance the amount of money and incentives that we can offer physicians to locate in those northern and rural communities. We had a program that simply wasn't addressing the problems of today. We have embarked on this new program, which is already showing results. We've already heard about doctors who have located in northern and rural areas. They are setting up practices. They are serving people. It is a tremendous success already, and it's only a couple of months into this new program. That's just one example of what we are doing—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: The NRRR is never going to take the place of a community-based hospital in rural Ontario. Once the hospital services are gone, part of the community fabric falls apart. The Ontario Health Coalition has done the work. They have written a very detailed report of what they've heard from across the province.

You see, because many hospitals in rural areas are amalgamated, the local residents do not have a say. The hospital corporation, located kilometres away, decides which sites it wants to operate and which sites it wants to close, no matter where the needs are, just to balance the books.

Will the McGuinty government commit to reviewing the Ontario Health Coalition report and take timely action on behalf of rural and northern residents?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I absolutely will. I already have committed to taking a very serious look at the Ontario Health Coalition's report. It is the perspective of a certain group of people who have taken a hard look at our health care system.

But I do have a question for the member opposite, and perhaps she would undertake to respond to me. One of the recommendations, I understand, in the report is the elimination of the community voice in our health care system, the elimination of our local health integration networks. I'm curious to know whether this is a move backward into more control by the centre that the member opposite would, in fact, support.

APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Acting Premier. I want to say to the Acting Premier that Patrick Dillon has his head so deep in the patronage trough that he needs a snorkel to breathe. You people are a disgrace in what you're doing.

While Patrick Dillon's anti-Tory campaign doesn't stop him from advancing in the McGuinty government, apparently Dalton McGuinty has no place for those with the integrity of André Marin. The Premier appears to be blocking Marin's reappointment as Ombudsman. You get

rid of Marin and you get rid of his LHIN report. The Premier has done nothing to stop backroom staffers and Liberal insiders from smearing Marin's reputation.

Media reports say that you've been promoting former Liberal MP Susan Whelan for the job. Acting Premier, what makes you think you can get away with trying to install a member of the Liberal family in this important office?

1140

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'll remind the member opposite what the Premier has said repeatedly both here in the House and in media interviews: that many of the recommendations coming from Mr. Marin's reports have been acted upon by the government. We believe that the course of action we're looking at in conjunction with the parties opposite is the appropriate way to look at positions such as the Ombudsman's. Advertising, as I understand it, during the first round was not as extensive as we may have liked. We've discussed earlier in the day the views expressed by both opposition parties. We recognize, as does the NDP, and the member for Welland had indicated earlier that it is important any time these positions come open to advertise and see who is available—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Sup-

plementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: It says something about Dalton Mc-Guinty in that he hasn't condemned Liberal insiders who defamed André Marin. If he gets his way, Dalton Mc-Guinty will have a not-so-independent Ombudsman who can kill Marin's LHIN report.

Dalton McGuinty needs to show more respect for his office and, more importantly, the Ombudsman's office. So I ask the Acting Premier: Where in the job advertisement for the Ontario Ombudsman did it say only Liberal

cronies could apply?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just ask the honourable member to withdraw that last comment, please.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Acting Premier.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I understand that the committee that's been charged by the House with looking at this ran an advertising campaign that was approved and agreed to by the parties. My understanding is that there's a desire to look at a wider opportunity to seek out more applicants. We think it's important. Again, Mr. Marin has served the province well. My understanding is that he intends to apply to continue to serve as Ontario's Ombudsman, and we look forward to the process yielding a recommendation with respect to the Ombudsman who will serve this province for the next several years.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Later this week, we're going to be hearing a lot about water and this government's plan for it, but as of today—today—Ontario has 435 outstanding boil-water advisories. That's 10 years after Walkerton.

Do you have a plan to ensure that all Ontarians have clean water?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I thank you very much for the question because it allows me to talk about what we've done as a result of the tragedy at Walkerton. There are some good things that came out of that, even though it was a tragedy itself, which we all acknowledge.

Let's talk about the 119 drinking water inspectors that we have hired since that time who, on a daily basis, look after the drinking water situation here in the province of Ontario by inspecting municipal drinking water systems. We can also talk about the 19 source water protection committees that are doing excellent work right now in mapping out and planning out the sources of the various water supplies around this province, whether it's river or stream water or whether we're talking about groundwater. We can talk about the 17,000 new and existing drinking water professionals who have been trained so far at the Walkerton Clean Water Centre. A lot has happened, including—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: When a minister doesn't address the question by saying when he's going to deal with 435 boil-water advisories, that says to me that the minister doesn't have an answer at all. But I'll try: When are you going to protect those people who are currently dealing with boil-water advisories? When are you going to take that on?

Hon. John Gerretsen: As a result of the Walkerton inquiry, we have implemented each and every one of the recommendations that were made by Justice O'Connor. It is true that a lot of work has been done in the whole area of providing Ontarians with clean drinking water. More can always be done. Obviously, we are concerned with any drinking water order that's out there right now. We are addressing those issues on a day-to-day basis.

MEMBER'S COMMENTS

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. This weekend there was a press release issued on behalf of the Conservative Party and its member for Simcoe—Grey. It said—sneeringly, I might add—that the Blue Mountain Resort was the host of a swanky Liberal policy conference. It implied that it was suspect for people to go to Collingwood, and this from a member who says he lives "in a part of the province that's very much dependent on tourism." Thousands and thousands of people go there. The member from Simcoe—Grey seems to miss the economic benefits of an attraction like Blue Mountain. The member's comments don't support tourism, jobs or economic growth in Simcoe or in Collingwood.

Minister, unlike the Conservative member for Simcoe-

Grey, what are you doing to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the member from Willowdale for the question. The release by the

Conservatives is simply outrageous and backwards. This is not how you attract visitors, jobs or economic growth. The member from Simcoe—Grey needs to stand up for local tourism. He needs to stand up for local attractions and he needs to stand up for local jobs. Talking down one of Ontario's top tourism destinations does not support tourism in Collingwood or in Ontario. Communities like these depend on a strong and vibrant tourism industry. The last thing these communities need is a party that tells the whole world not to visit Collingwood.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. David Zimmer: Collingwood is a great place, and the member for Simcoe-Grey should know that. He should support Collingwood. Here is what I found really odd when he criticized us for our policy conference there. It was very odd because about five years ago he called it a relaxed, informal place and then he went and organized a \$125-per-ticket reception at the same facility to recognize—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: Hit man from Willowdale.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That's not helpful, member from Cambridge.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): And that's not helpful either, Minister of Economic Development.

I'm quite comfortable just to let the clock run. I would just remind the members that we are here to do business. I would remind members on both sides of the House too that personal attacks are not helpful—and I'm going to be adding a little more to that in a few moments—personal attacks on a member in a question are not helpful at all.

With that, I am moving to a new question. The member for Dufferin-Caledon.

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Last year, a record 37 children's aid societies were forced to file section 14 reviews with your ministry after their budgets were cut. Many had to draw from a line of credit last year in order to provide mandated services, and many are starting this fiscal year with a deficit. Now, 11 children's aid societies have filed for a judicial review of the section 14 process.

Minister, I asked you last week but you did not answer: Can you share with the many children's aid societies who are here at Queen's Park today when the last time was that a judicial review had to be filed by a funding partner?

1150

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to welcome the leadership of the OACAS and all children's aid societies here today to talk about this terrifically important issue, and that is how we can work together to ensure that we have better outcomes for Ontario's kids.

In 2010-11, we will invest more than \$1.4 billion in child protection service in this province. That provides us

with a tremendous opportunity ahead of us to look at this important investment and make sure that we are all working towards better outcomes for Ontario's kids. That is exactly what we are doing. We're working through our commission to promote the sustainability of children's aid societies, to find a pathway to sustainability, to ensure that the outcomes lead to better outcomes for Ontario's kids

Something that we all agree on is the key focus and key priority of every CAS across the province and of our government as well as—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: The minister did not answer my question. You know very well that the services provided by children's aid societies are mandated through legislation. They cannot shut their doors or turn families away, but many children's aid societies, like Durham and York, have been forced to cut front-line workers.

Children's aid societies across Ontario are here today because they are struggling. In 2010-11, many are projecting a deficit situation again. Minister, clearly, filing a judicial review is an unprecedented move on behalf of children's aid societies and the 11 that were forced into it, and an indication to me of just how out of touch you are as the minister on what their responsibilities are. How could your relationship with the children's aid societies deteriorate so quickly?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm very pleased to talk about the fact that we are on the side of Ontario kids here in this government. I'm going to remind the member opposite about the increases that we have seen in funding for children's aid societies in the past 10 years: from \$500 million to \$1.4 billion. That \$1.4 billion is spent on better outcomes for kids.

I want to remind the members opposite what their record was with respect to children. You froze children's mental health base funding for your whole term in office. You cut off kids with autism at age six. You slashed thousands of child care subsidies. You attempted to muzzle the child advocate. And in this House, while we've sought to increase services for kids, you voted against child care spaces, you voted against recent increases for children's treatment centres and you voted against the Ontario child benefit.

On this side of the House, we are on the side of Ontario's—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Acting Premier. Your government told cities and towns across the province not to worry about the harmonized sales tax. It won't affect municipal budgets. The HST is supposed to be revenue-neutral for municipalities. Why does Sudbury expect the HST to cost the city \$450,000 every year?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I appreciate the question. I've had an opportunity to meet with municipal leaders right across this province. I, first of all, want to thank the Minister of Finance, who set the reimbursement rate on the provincial portion of the HST at 78%. That is leading the country when it comes to support by a province to its municipal partners, and I want to thank him for that.

In regard to the question, specifically, I have had an opportunity to meet with many clerks and treasurers from across the municipal sector getting into the details of how they can ensure that their municipality is held whole. As the minister has said, the 78% reimbursement is for the broad municipal sector, as we have for many others in the MUSH sector.

I'd be more than happy to help the good people of Sudbury take a look at how they are applying this rule and the assumptions they are making. As I have done that, municipalities increasingly have come to the conclusion that they're actually in a slightly better position—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Sup-

plementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Minister, not only are our cities and towns left paying more; people who use municipal services will pay more too. In Sudbury, a three-month swimming pool pass will jump by \$6; ice time in Windsor going up \$11; renting a baseball diamond in Wiarton is going up nearly \$20.

How can the Liberals claim that the HST won't affect municipalities when it's going to cost towns, cities and the people who rely on these services hundreds of thou-

sands of dollars more every year?

Hon. John Wilkinson: As I have mentioned, as we have been dealing with municipalities—for example, the city of Peterborough finds that they will be \$600,000 ahead.

Here is what municipalities and their constituents, who are our constituents, have said: "We need more people working in the province of Ontario." On this side of the House, we have a plan that will see 591,000 more people working in this province. On that side of the House, their advice to us is, "Do nothing." We reject that.

On this side of the House, we have a plan that will see some \$47 billion worth of more investments into our municipalities. On that side of the House, they say, "Do

nothing." We reject that advice.

We have dealt with municipalities. They appreciate the support, and they understand that for us to be able to support our municipalities, we need people working. That's exactly why we are reforming—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New

question.

PHARMACISTS

Mr. Dave Levac: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. As many members already know all too well, Big Pharma and others have been bombarding my constituents with confusing calls from telemarketers and other propaganda in order to encourage and trick them into opposing the reforms of the Ontario drug system.

I have been hearing from countless constituents who say that enough is enough. They are sick of being confronted with negative adverts, misleading literature, invasive phone calls and push polls. They have asked me, as their MPP, to stand up for them, take action and bring clarity to the issue.

The local pharmacists whom I've met with agree with me that we need to lower the temperature and talk. Could the minister tell this House what my constituents should do in response to these American-style political campaign letters, push polls and phone calls?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I urge all Ontarians to get the facts, the whole story about our proposed drug reforms. These facts will give them the information they need when they get these misleading and intrusive phone calls at their home. The website ontario.ca/fairdrugprices is the place to go to get that information.

Fair drug prices—that is what we want to do in this province, and that is what our reforms will lead to. Our reforms will save some diabetes patients almost \$1,000 every year on the cost of their medications. Patients suffering from acid reflux or ulcers could save more than \$250 a year. These are just a few examples; there are many, many more. That is why we have the support of the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Cancer Society and so many other health care advocates.

The members opposite—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Dave Levac: I recently wrote a letter to Mr. Jürgen Schreiber, the CEO and president of Shoppers Drug Mart, asking him politely to stop this Washington-style manipulative campaign, but it has recently come to my attention that I might also want to ask the opposition to do the same.

It is my understanding that the Leader of the Opposition's own campaign manager, Mark Spiro, may be the mastermind behind this big pharmacy, American-style smear campaign, that he's leading the charge to manipulate and scare people in my riding in an attempt to preserve the status quo.

Could I ask the minister if she could tell this House how this government is dealing with this Washingtonstyle dirty-trick campaign?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I do find it rather interesting that the party opposite has chosen to take the side of the big pharmacy chains against the people of Ontario and lower drug prices for Ontario families.

But I want to put politics aside here and focus on what it is we're trying to achieve. We are focused on getting lower drug prices, fairer drug prices, for the people of Ontario. We want to explain to the man with epilepsy that once our reforms are in place, he could save perhaps \$400 a year in medication costs. We're telling a woman working at a minimum-wage job that she could save \$80 or more on her birth control pills every year.

I want big chain drug stores and the members opposite to understand that our government is standing up for hard-working taxpayers. We are determined to get the very best value for every dollar we spend in health care.

1200

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Acting Premier: The events of this week have undermined the public's confidence in the OSPCA. That confidence will only be restored if the public is convinced that a truly independent investigation has taken place, is told the truth about what happened in York region, and is assured that the necessary oversight is in place to ensure that it can never happen again. That public confidence will not be restored if the OSPCA is allowed to commission and oversee its own investigation.

I'm asking the Acting Premier: Will he agree with me that the only way to restore that public confidence is for the Minister of Community Safety to appoint an independent investigator who will have that report back to him and to this Legislature—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Acting Premier?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The members of this House, and indeed all Ontarians, were deeply troubled by the circumstances last week. I believe that the government has followed the legislation carefully. The OSPCA, as I understand it, is appointing a review of this matter with independent veterinarians and advisers. That process will yield, I suspect, recommendations with respect to how to move forward to avoid these sorts of circumstances again.

We will continue to monitor what's happening. The independent investigation that's going on, I believe, is appropriate in the circumstances to help satisfy the concerns that have been expressed by so many Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: I fail to see why the government continues to let the OSPCA twist in the wind. The board admitted that that organization and its board made serious mistakes. Now the government is allowing that same board to appoint an investigator to investigate itself. This does nothing to restore public confidence.

I'm going to ask the minister one more time: Will he and his government do the right thing and take control of this file, appoint the independent investigator, require that that report comes back to the minister, not the board, and to this Legislature so that we can find out what went wrong, who was responsible and ensure this never happens again?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I remind the member opposite that the OSPCA is an independent organization, as established by legislation that was approved by this House. There have been, over time, a number of changes to the act. Governments have recognized that animal welfare is best left to veterinarians and animal care experts.

I believe the OSPCA has taken the appropriate steps in this case, and that their findings will, hopefully, help avoid the very unfortunate circumstances that all of us witnessed last week and lead to a stronger system of protection of animals in Ontario going forward.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Attorney General. Today is the International Day Against Homophobia, and for the third time, I, on behalf of trans groups across Ontario, am introducing Toby's Act to add gender identity to the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Barbara Hall, as chair of the Human Rights Commission, agrees, and the commission twice has called for this, dating back to 1999. It's time to deliver on trans human rights. Why won't the Attorney General act?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: It is important that today we all stand together and recognize that discrimination based on homophobia and transphobia is simply not acceptable. We stand together today, and we stand together every single other day of the year.

I was at a launch this morning of the website mygsa.ca, created by Egale. The work that Tara Elliott and Egale are doing is extremely important.

I want to make one thing clear to all members of the Legislature and all those who are watching: We do have protections in our human rights system that guarantee the very goal that my friend speaks about. The law is clear; the legislation is clear; the protections exist. Let's make sure everybody understands that, as of today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary? Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Absolutely not; it is not clear.

The Alberta Supreme Court has said that non-enumerated rights do not hold up. The Trans Pulse project has actually looked at over 400 transfolk in Ontario, and they say they're not protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Ontario Human Rights Code says it needs gender identity in the Ontario Human Rights Code to protect transpeople.

How many more times do transfolk, on the day to end homophobia, have to come begging to the McGuinty Liberals before they will act to protect them?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: There is always more to do about education, about ensuring that we strengthen the protections we have, about making sure that everybody in society, everybody in Ontario, understands that we stand and must stand as one on this issue.

But I do not want anybody to take my friend's question and think or believe or be uncertain—the protections in law exist today. I say that to those who may need to access them. I say that to those who may think they can get away with discrimination. There is no acceptance and no tolerance in the law. Be clear: The law is clear, the protections exist, and the human rights system is there for the protection of all those in the—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Ontario's 53 children's aid societies provide important services to keep families together and to protect children and youth and help them reach their full potential; for example, Family and Children's Services in Guelph has an amazing foster care program. To do this, CASs rely on a wide network of volunteers and committed staff, many of whom are here today at Queen's Park talking about the important services that they provide in communities across Ontario.

Government also has a significant role to play in supporting vulnerable children and youth. Just today, the Laidlaw Foundation released a report talking about what governments, both provincial and federal, can be doing to better support crown wards.

What is our government doing to support children's

aid societies, Minister?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm very pleased to have a chance to talk about the more than \$1.4-billion investment that we are making in child protection services across the province. Those resources are in addition to the variety of services that are provided to children and youth and their families to make sure that we can have a society where we have better outcomes for kids.

I want to speak directly to the volunteers and the volunteer board members who are part of children's aid societies, because they are the ones who deliver on the vision of more than 100 years ago when J.J. Kelso said that we needed to work in communities to protect Ontario's kids. They do that in communities across the province. We look forward to being their partner and walking toward a pathway to find a sustainable future for child protection in this province and, at the same time, find better avenues to protect Ontario's kids and give them the outcomes that we want them all to have.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Minister, I'd like to thank you for taking time to recognize the volunteers and front-line staff. However, recognizing those contributions alone

isn't enough.

I'm hearing from the CAS in my riding—Family and Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County—that it has been very difficult for CASs to manage within their funding envelope. On the other hand, overall government funding for CASs has increased by over \$1 billion in the last 10 years, from about \$500 million in 1999 to over \$1.4 billion this year. That kind of growth isn't sustainable in good times and certainly isn't sustainable in these tough economic times.

Can the minister please tell the House what work is being done to ensure the long-term sustainability of

children's aid?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to thank the member for Guelph for her advocacy and for her leadership on this file in her community.

The children's aid society of Guelph is doing very important work, and they are part of the children's aids across the province who are working hard to improve the outcomes in the child protection system. Thanks to the changes realized through the child welfare transformation and the hard work of CASs across the province, like in

Guelph, fewer kids are coming into care and more kids are getting the chance to succeed in permanent homes.

But the funding growth that the member spoke about is simply not sustainable, and that's why we have taken the action of creating the Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare to start down a path with CASs to ensure a sustainable future. But most importantly, our priority focus is ensuring that Ontario's kids have the best possible outcomes, that we give them every opportunity and that we continue to work as a collective to make sure that vision is a reality.

TAXATION

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Acting Premier. Liberals who gathered with elites over the weekend gave rapturous applause to Jeff Rubin when he called for a carbon tax. The former Mayor of Winnipeg, the Liberal member for downtown Toronto, is tweeting to rally support for your new carbon tax. Are you people so addicted that you're planning your next new tax grab when you haven't even fully implemented your \$3-billion HST tax grab?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have embraced cap and trade as a way of moving forward on climate change and reducing greenhouse gases. Our government has joined the Western Climate Initiative and a number of other opportunities. We have also embarked on a policy of closing all of Ontario's coal-fired generation plants by 2014. My understanding is that we are producing much less CO₂, resulting from our ability to close down Lakeview in Mississauga and beginning to start to shut down the furnaces in other coal-fired plants.

That is our government's response to climate change. We have not in the past, nor do we now, advocate a carbon tax. We will continue to work on the cap-and-trade system and look forward to what happens, particularly with the United States—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: They denied they'd be coming in with the HST at one point, too. There are 45 days left before Dalton McGuinty starts taking 8% more from the pockets of Ontario families, and the surprises just keep on coming.

The HST applies to some items now. Tax collectors who won't miss a day of work get severance. You're raising prices to pocket more profit, and so will business. You knew the HST wasn't revenue-neutral but you said it was. Now you're planning to bring in a job-killing carbon tax, and we haven't even talked about your energy price increases and your backdoor energy tax grab. After six years, Dalton McGuinty has become too arrogant and out of touch.

What makes you think you will get away with your latest plan to attack and empty the pocketbooks of Ontario families?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: With respect to the HST, the member knows full well that our comprehensive tax package will actually reduce taxes for all Ontarians. I'll remind him of what his former leader said just on May 10. This is Mr. John Tory speaking: "I think [Hudak] has not acknowledged something that pretty well everybody else has. A lot of people call and say it is going to help with productivity and job creation and investment and the cost of capital. So I felt dishonest if I came out and said I was four-square against it because that benefit is significant." John Tory's right, Jim Flaherty's right, Cheryl Gallant's right, John Baird's right—a whole range of federal Tories.

That policy will create jobs, and that party still hasn't said whether or not they're going to repeal it. I'd invite the member for bluster to come clean on that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

POVERTY

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Acting Premier. More and more Ontarians are struggling with poverty despite the McGuinty government's promise to actually reduce poverty. More residents of Toronto are waiting for affordable housing, they're turning to food banks, and they too are falling into poverty.

During the recent by-election campaign, the government's candidate and now-MPP for Toronto Centre promised that this government would develop neighbourhood plans to address pressing needs in Regent Park, St. Jamestown and other downtown poor neighbourhoods within 100 days of the election. Well, 100 days have passed. Can the Acting Premier tell us where the downtown Toronto neighbourhood plans are, and will the Acting Premier and the government share them with this House?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have advanced an antipoverty agenda for many years. The new member has undertaken extensive consultation within his constituency around these neighbourhood plans. We have taken action across a range of files. For instance, the Ontario child benefit, which we have raised this year and that member voted against, will affect every poor neighbourhood in Toronto very directly. In terms of raising the minimum wage, which we have done continually, that affects every poor neighbourhood, every challenged neighbourhood in Toronto and, indeed, right across the province.

By setting out a poverty strategy, which many experts have cited as a leading example of how to proceed, that will benefit every neighbourhood in Ontario. It's important.

Finally, I will remind him of what Hugh Mackenzie and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives say: that this government's tax policy helps Ontario's poorest people. It helps lift them out of poverty, helps reduce barriers. There's more to do—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: In the past 100 days, the two key things the McGuinty government have done around poverty are that they have cut the special diet allowance and they have shortened and delayed the Transit City lines that poor people rely on to get around.

Election promises are serious things, particularly when they are made to people in need. But there is no mention of neighbourhood plans or public meetings to develop such plans on any government website, despite the fact they were promised by a government member during the campaign and since the time he has been in this House.

How many hundreds of days more will people in Toronto Centre and in the downtown core of Toronto have to wait for the promised neighbourhood plans?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member opposite first of all did not, in my view, correctly characterize the initiatives we have taken with respect to transit in this community and elsewhere. But I would remind the member opposite that the Ontario sales tax credit of \$260 for each adult and child is permanent; it will reflect relief for 2.9 million Ontarians. That member and his party voted against it. A family of four with an annual income of \$25,000 will permanently save \$1,040.

Again, I need to go back to the Ontario child benefit, which goes into each and every neighbourhood in Toronto, each and every neighbourhood across our urban centres and, indeed, across rural areas throughout the province. That member voted against it, which is most unfortunate.

Finally, we are creating full-day learning for our four-year-olds and five-year-olds. That—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Just a few comments to the members of the Legislature who are here, and I can assure you I will be repeating these comments at the beginning of a question period as well.

I've had the privilege to serve in this chair since November 28, 2007, and this was one of the worst question periods I've experienced, and I'm saying it to both sides of the House.

I received a very interesting note from a member today: "We need a healthy dose of political check to bring all sides back to what we are elected to do: govern the province. That's the role Her Majesty's loyal opposition has to play and the role that the government has to play."

But as we go forward—and I don't want to put up with this until we leave in June 2011, when we all embark from this place and go out on a mission, and we all know what that is. But I'm just imploring all members that we need to use more temperate language in this place.

And yes, you each need to remember that we are all protected by privilege. We also need to accept a level of responsibility when making allegations and comments on the conduct of citizens of this province.

I want to quote from a ruling of Speaker Milliken: "Speakers discourage members of Parliament from using

names in speeches if they are speaking ill of some other person because, with parliamentary privilege applying to what they say, anything that is damaging to the reputation or to the individual ... is then liable to be published with the cover of parliamentary privilege and the person is unable"—that person who has been spoken of—"to bring any action in respect of those claims."

In addition, the use of certain language—suggestive language or innuendo—with regard to individuals, as we've seen today from both sides of this House, can provoke an angry response, which, as we have seen

today, inevitably leads to disorder.

I'm asking all members—again, on all sides—to exercise more responsibility in the future and to not abuse this wonderful privilege of freedom of speech that each one of us enjoys in this House. This applies equally to the hurling of insults at each other and to personal attacks. As I've said previously and I will always believe, I know that each and every member in this House is capable of a higher standard.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1221 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to welcome family and friends of Richard, Laurie, Cassandra and Jordan Hawkins, who, a year and a half ago, tragically lost their lives due to carbon monoxide poisoning. Here today is John Gignac, Laurie's uncle, who created the End the Silence Foundation. Kayla, Kendra and Tom Hawkins Jr. came all the way from North Bay to be here today.

I would also like to welcome Carole Heller from Kidde, Chuck Rachis and Mary Ellen Sheppard from the carbon monoxide coalition, Pat Folliot from Readyclick, John Rutkaukas and Glyn Parsons from the Oxford OPP, and a number of firefighters from the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario: Willie Gregg, Dave Carruthers, Rob Simpson and, from Brampton, Brian Maltby.

I thank them for being here today as we introduce the private member's legislation.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I'm very happy to introduce my uncle, Yahya Naqvi, who's visiting Queen's Park today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Again, I welcome back the transactivists who were here this morning supporting to Toby's bill or law that will be tabled this afternoon. Welcome.

Mr. Dave Levac: I know he's been introduced, but I wanted to support Mr. Hardeman, the member from Oxford, on his private member's bill, and I thank him for that. John Gignac, who is a constituent of mine, is also a member of a group called the Friends of the Firefighters, doing the same work that he's doing nationally. So I welcome him here in the House today.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to welcome to the east members' gallery some members and staff from

Egale: Tara Elliott; Alex Duffy is coming—Alex Duffy will join us; Michael Pelz; Simon LeBrun is going to join us; and Maria Lau is here as well. Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

JAMES McCRACKEN

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to be able to stand here today to say thank you to Jamie McCracken, who is the retiring director of education with the Ottawa Catholic School Board.

Jamie has been an educator for 30 years, and seven years as the director. I've gotten to know him over my four years as a public servant for Nepean—Carleton. As you know, Nepean—Carleton is one of the fastest-growing communities in all of Ontario, and with that growth, it means we must keep up with our infrastructure. Particularly when you have a high birth rate like Nepean—Carleton, it means you've got to keep up with the schools.

I can say that Mr. McCracken, through his time as director of education, was able to manage the growth. He was able to support our community by working with us to ensure that we were able to build the necessary school infrastructure.

One school in particular comes to mind. A couple of years ago, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Department of Fisheries, if you can believe it, and the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority almost put a halt to one of our schools, the new St. Francis Xavier high school in Riverside South. It was through Jamie McCracken's leadership and work with Ottawa city councillors and our federal member of Parliament, Pierre Poilievre, and myself that we were able to bring everyone to the table to get that school built, and I really credit Jamie for that.

So I want to, first of all, say thank you to him. Second of all, I want to wish him very, very happy times in his retirement. I think that it's going to be a great one.

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia is an opportunity to rededicate our efforts to end the attitudes and stereotypes that lead to direct and indirect discrimination against gay men, lesbians and bisexual, transsexual and transgendered people.

Homophobia and transphobia, like racism, sexism or anti-Semitism, have devastating effects. The suicide rate among young gays is much higher than among heterosexual males. Fear of rejection and isolation means that a great many gays and lesbians live in secret, and transgendered and transsexual persons continue to be marginalized to the fringes of society.

Ontario's New Democrats believe that our strength and vibrancy as a society comes from embracing and celebrating our diversity. We encourage all Ontarians to join together in our homes, schools, workplaces and communities, and to lend our voices and actions to end homophobia and transphobia today.

Let us begin right now by including gender identity in

the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just remind all our guests that we certainly welcome them to the Legislature. As much as they may desire to participate in the process, they need to be a sitting member to do so, and I just would ask that you refrain from applause. Thank you.

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: May 17 is the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. I feel very strongly that it is important to mark this day in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

We, as Canadians, are rightfully proud of our culture, respect and inclusion for all people of all backgrounds and persuasions. We, as a government, are committed to

those values in the most profound way.

Sadly, despite great and continuing strides for human rights, we know that our friends and fellow citizens of the TBLG community continue to face persistent discrimination, intimidation and misguided animosity. It is imperative that we, as a government and as individuals, continue to work unfailingly toward a better and more just society. We must ensure that our workplaces thrive with equality and inclusivity. We must ensure that our public education system welcomes all, supports meaningful inclusion and teaches our children respect and understanding. We must ensure that our health care system provides the best possible care regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. We must ensure that the laws that protect each person from acts of homophobia are consistently applied. Finally, we must ensure, as members of our community and individuals, that we do everything in our power every day to do the right thing, stand up for what we believe is right and what is fair and struggle against the ugly transgressions we see still.

In its seventh year, the International Day Against Homophobia's campaign focuses on homophobia in sport, which is fitting in Canada's Olympic year.

Just as we came together to celebrate the unifying power of sport in Vancouver, let us come together again today to rally for diversity and inclusivity in our society, and reject homophobia and transphobia.

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: A year and a half ago a young family, Richard, Laurie, Cassandra and Jordan Hawkins, lost their lives due to carbon monoxide in their home in Oxford. Their relatives and friends are here today hoping that this Legislature will help to prevent similar tragedies in the future.

Members might remember that just over a year ago, we unanimously gave the Hawkins Gignac Act second reading. This bill would make functioning carbon monoxide detectors mandatory in every home in Ontario. Unfortunately the bill was lost when the government prorogued the Legislature on March 4, but the people who understand that this inexpensive device saves lives have continued to work hard to promote its use. I want to thank John Gignac, Laurie's uncle, who has created the End the Silence Foundation to educate the people on the importance of having a functioning carbon monoxide detector in their home.

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Carbon monoxide is tasteless, colourless and odourless. It is often called the silent killer because it gives no warning to its victims. Carbon monoxide is the number one cause of accidental poisoning deaths in North America.

Today we have the opportunity to take a step forwards towards saving lives. Later this afternoon, I will introduce the Hawkins Gignac Act, word for word the exact same bill that this House agreed last year was essential. This legislation will save lives. I ask you to work with me and to ensure it is passed as quickly as possible to avoid more tragedies.

And I ask everyone to help save lives by making sure that you have a working carbon monoxide detector in your home today.

PORT CREDIT SALMON AND TROUT ASSOCIATION

Mr. Charles Sousa: I rise today to recognize the Port Credit Salmon and Trout Association, which recently formed in the riding of Mississauga South. They came together in March of this year to promote and protect the trout and salmon populations in the Credit River and Lake Ontario. The association formed to combat the decline in local trout and salmon stocks and work towards growing the lake's fish populations.

In its first month alone, the association has already taken some important steps towards realizing this goal. They have recruited over 100 members and initiated Port Credit's first pen rearing project.

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and its partners stock about 1.7 million salmon and trout into lake Ontario annually to provide fish opportunities and support native species restoration. Of those, about 85,000 chinook salmon are stocked in the Credit River. This year, a small number of chinook salmon are being held in a pen in Port Credit prior to being stocked in the lake. The association is playing a crucial role in these efforts by caring for the fish. Soon, these 5,000 salmon will be mature enough to be released into the lake.

Port Credit has a long history as a fishing village. In the past, our community was home to a large commercial fishing industry, and to this day many local businesses continue to depend on this important fishery, including fishing charters, the Port Credit harbour, village marinas, and dozens of local restaurants and coffee shops.

Port Credit is also home to Ontario's largest salmon derby, which is a tremendous tourism destination for anglers from all over Ontario and the United States. It's no surprise that the village prides itself on being the salmon capital of Ontario.

I want to commend the Port Credit Salmon and Trout Association for their work in promoting conservation and developing this world-class fishery.

ABILITIES CENTRE

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Each of us was elected with a vision of making a difference for our family, our community and our province, in hopes that future generations live a life that's better than ours today. As elected officials, we are granted a certain stature, at least in the minds of some, that gives us an added ability to better the world that surrounds us and fulfill visions that don't necessarily fall into the mandate to which we were elected. I rise today to congratulate two such individuals for their dedication, hard work and commitment in making our world a better place through the actions of their vision that allowed for a groundbreaking ceremony to take place Friday last.

Christine Elliott and Jim Flaherty, through their personal vision, dedication, planning, and fundraising, broke the ground on the Abilities Centre in Whitby, Ontario. The Abilities Centre is a world-class recreation, athletic and performing arts centre that is fully accessible to persons with varying degrees of abilities and chal-

lenges.

The Abilities Centre is partnering with the Iroquois Park Sports Centre in Whitby and will build on their existing facilities and services. This new, barrier-free facility will include a field house which will contain walking trails; track; full-sized courts; fitness facilities; therapy rooms; life skills; art and music programs; performing arts components and much more. In addition, the centre is intended to be an international centre of excellence for the development and implementation of inclusionary practices for people with special needs.

The overall goal of the Abilities Centre is to shift the paradigm: Instead of seeing disabilities, our focus will be

on the abilities of each person.

Good job—no, great job, Christine and Jim, and thank you for making our world a better place.

RESUSCITATION OUTCOMES CONSORTIUM

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I'm pleased to rise today to discuss the great work of the Resuscitation Outcomes Consortium, commonly known as ROC, which is making a difference every single day.

We have in the House today with us several very important people with the ROC: Laurie Morrison, Tyrone Perreira, Precilla Dsouza, Jaime Beecroft, Andrew

Brooks, Monica Yu, Suzanne Chung, Julie Saccone and Anuar Turgulov. Thank you very much for being here today.

The ROC is a large, multinational research collaboration of 10 sites across the United States and Canada, including one right here in Toronto, which are doing research on cardiac arrest and life-threatening trauma. In fact, in five regional sites which have participated, the cardiac arrest survival rates have more than tripled. Those involved in the project include hospitals, EMS services, not-for-profits and federal agencies.

As you know, my private member's bill, Bill 41, passed second reading on May 6, and the ROC's research was an important part of that. I want to take this opportunity to recognize and extend my sincere thanks to the ROC and all its partners, in both Canada and the United States, for their invaluable contribution to public health. I especially want to thank Dr. Laurie Morrison of Rescu at St. Michael's Hospital here in Toronto for her dedication and incredible hard work.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF POLICE SERVICES BOARDS

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Today is Queen's Park Day for the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards. Our civilian police services boards strive to ensure the highest standard of policing excellence in the area they represent. As a result, the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards is a leader in promoting community safety across the province.

Our government has a strong working relationship with the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards and their 174 members. That relationship has allowed our government to implement several successful law enforcement initiatives since coming to office. For example, we launched the Safer Communities—1,000 Officers partnership. We also implemented successful anti-violence intervention strategies in Toronto and 17 other communities across Ontario, and we are doubling the province's annual contribution to the RIDE program. What's more, we've worked together to put more police officers on the streets and remove violent gangs, firearms and illegal drugs from those same streets.

I know that all my colleagues here will join me in thanking the men and women of Ontario's police services boards. Law enforcement is a very complicated and challenging profession, and their efforts keep our communities safe. We are immensely grateful for the work they do on our behalf.

KEVIN McKAY

Mr. Reza Moridi: It is with great sadness that I stand before the members of the Ontario Legislature today to honour the supreme sacrifice of Private Kevin Thomas McKay, a Richmond Hill native who was killed last week by a roadside bomb near Kandahar, Afghanistan. My heartfelt sympathy goes out to Private McKay's father, mother and brother.

Private McKay, aged 24, was completing his first tour with the First Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry when he was killed. "Mickey," as he was known, "was a great soldier and an even better individual," said Captain Michael Hughes. "The boys of the platoon really loved Mickey."

Private McKay was two days away from the end of his tour when he was killed. His father, a captain with the Toronto Fire Services, described his son as "everybody's friend" and "the kind of guy that would take his shirt off

his back to help someone out."

Private McKay is the sixth Canadian military member to die in Afghanistan this year and the 144th soldier killed since the start of the Afghan mission in 2002. He is the second Richmond Hill native to die in Afghanistan.

I would ask that a minute of silence be observed in

honour of Private Kevin Thomas McKay.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would ask all members and our guests to please join me as we observe a moment of silence for the passing of Private McKay.

The House observed a moment's silence.

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REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit / Projet de loi 44, Loi mettant en oeuvre le crédit pour les coûts d'énergie dans le Nord de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 10, 2010, the bill is ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

OPEN FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO PROPICE AUX AFFAIRES

Ms. Pupatello moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 68, An Act to promote Ontario as open for business by amending or repealing certain Acts / Projet

de loi 68, Loi favorisant un Ontario propice aux affaires en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The minister for a short statement?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I'll make my statement during ministerial statements.

HAWKINS GIGNAC ACT (CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS), 2010

LOI HAWKINS GIGNAC DE 2010 (DÉTECTEURS DE MONOXYDE DE CARBONE)

Mr. Hardeman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 69, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 to require carbon monoxide detectors in all residential buildings / Projet de loi 69, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment pour exiger l'installation de détecteurs de monoxyde de carbone dans tous les bâtiments servant à l'habitation.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Over a year and a half ago I introduced a bill, the Hawkins Gignac Act, in response to the tragic death of a young family in Oxford from carbon monoxide poisoning. Over a year ago, thanks to all the dedicated supporters and my fellow MPPs, we passed second reading unanimously. This spring, when the Ontario Legislature prorogued, the Hawkins Gignac Act died on the order paper. It seemed that all the work was lost

I rise today to reintroduce that exact same act, which will require that functioning carbon monoxide detectors be mandatory in every home in Ontario. The short title of the bill is also the same, the Hawkins Gignac Act, in honour of the family that was lost.

As I said earlier, this bill is, word for word, the same as the one that was introduced and that passed first and second reading unanimously last year, so members have already seen it and had a chance to review it. For that reason, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to put the bill for second reading immediately.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Oxford seeks unanimous consent of the House to call for second reading. Agreed? I heard a no.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I appreciate you recognizing me, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to point out, because I know we have family members here, that the Hawkins Gignac Act is very personal to a great number of people, including people in my riding of North Bay. We did have a discussion, and

there was no agreement to move for unanimous consent on second reading. I just wanted to clarify that so they didn't take any offence. This is a proper—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

TOBY'S ACT (RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT BECAUSE OF GENDER IDENTITY), 2010

LOI TOBY DE 2010 SUR LE DROIT À L'ABSENCE DE DISCRIMINATION ET DE HARCÈLEMENT FONDÉS SUR L'IDENTITÉ DE GENRE

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 70, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code respecting gender identity / Projet de loi 70, Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne en ce qui concerne l'identité de genre.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is Toby's Act (Right to be Free from Discrimination and Harassment Because of Gender Identity), 2010, named after Toby Dancer, a renowned musician who lost his life and who was a trans activist.

The bill amends the Ontario Human Rights Code to specify that every person has a right to equal treatment without discrimination because of gender identity with respect to services, goods and facilities; accommodation; contracting; employment; and membership in a trade union, trade or occupational association or self-governing profession. The bill also amends the code to specify that every person has a right to be free from harassment because of gender identity with respect to accommodation and employment.

This is the third time I've tabled this bill, and still no action from the McGuinty Liberals. We want trans—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. I need to remind all members once again that when they are introducing a private member's bill, they are to read the introductory statement. I recognize that sometimes introductory statements can be very long as well, but we need to make sure that all members are consistent and stick to that script or I'm going to have to start being the schoolmarm, holding the bill in front of me and following all that.

DEFENDING EMPLOYEES' RIGHTS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA DÉFENSE DES DROITS DES EMPLOYÉS

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 71, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 to increase the rights of members of trade unions and the duty of trade unions to disclose financial information / Projet de loi 71, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail pour accroître les droits des membres des syndicats et l'obligation des syndicats de divulguer des renseignements financiers.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Directly from the explanatory note: This bill amends the Labour Relations Act, 1995, to prohibit the Ontario Labour Relations Board from certifying the union as a bargaining agent of the employees in a bargaining unit unless a representation vote by the employees is held; the amount that a collective agreement between an employer and a trade union can require an employer to deduct from the wages of each employee in the unit affected by the agreement—the part of the employee's regular union dues that relates to collective bargaining—and does not include any amount that relates to any other purpose unless the employee specifically authorizes the trade union to include that amount in the deduction.

This bill requires a trade union that is party to a collective agreement to file a yearly statement with the minister setting out the dues that are payable to it under the agreement and particulars of its expenses incurred during the year, with a breakdown given of expenses of \$5,000 or more. The minister is required to post the statement on the ministry's website on the Internet, and the trade union is required to make a copy of the statement available to its members upon request.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Since 2003, the government of Ontario has demonstrated a commitment to working with the business community to generate investment and create jobs for Ontario families. As the economy continues to show signs of recovery, we're continuing our work to make Ontario a great place to start and grow a business through the Open Ontario plan.

Today, we've tabled an act in the House: the Open for Business Act. It has been introduced today in the Legislature and, if passed, would save businesses both time and money while continuing to protect the public interest. The act includes legislative changes and updates to statutes from 10 different ministries that would deliver results for business.

In our consultations with business, they frequently asked for changes to modernize environmental and labour legislation. The proposed amendments to the En-

vironmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act would allow the province to move to a modern, risk-based approach for approvals, focusing resources on activities that pose the greatest risk to the environment.

Ontario is one of the last jurisdictions in North America without a risk-based approach to environmental approvals. The current system places Ontario businesses at a disadvantage, causing unnecessary delays and increased costs.

My colleague the Minister of the Environment is going to speak to specifics in a moment, but I'm confident that these changes would enhance public transparency and environmental protection while improving services to business. The act allows businesses to comply in a much greater way.

Our balanced approach is also reflected in amendments proposed by the Ministry of Labour. The Employment Standards Act is an area where business has frequently asked for improvement. Among other things, the proposed changes included in the Open for Business Act would encourage employees and employers to settle disputes at an early stage, avoiding unnecessary costs for both parties, let alone the time involved for both, and allowing employment standards officers to focus on the current backlog of claims. The removal of the claims backlog would allow the Ministry of Labour to focus on public education and outreach, as well as conduct more proactive inspections that would reach more workplaces.

Speaking in more general terms, the Open for Business Act aims to provide businesses with time and cost savings by:

—improving approvals and modernizing services;

—harmonizing legislation with other jurisdictions to lighten the administrative burden on business. We've watched through the Ontario-Quebec accord—it will necessitate us working together with colleague jurisdictions;

—delivering faster and easier government-to-business services; and

—responding to business and stakeholder requests by addressing specific issues.

We've taken great care to ensure that these changes continue to protect consumers, workers and the environment. Through creating a more focused regulatory environment, the government of Ontario will be able to ensure stronger, more rigorous compliance and improve the relationship between government and business.

Our government-wide Open for Business initiative is already making it easier for Ontario businesses to grow and succeed. Here is just a sample of our earlier achievements:

In September 2009, the Ministry of the Environment eliminated a backlog of about 1,700 applications for environmental certificates of approval. For business, this often means that they can move ahead with an investment rather than sitting and waiting through that process;

As of November 2009, ministries must post all proposed regulations that affect Ontario businesses on the

regulatory registry website. This helps businesses to learn about the regulatory proposals, provide input, and plan for future requirements;

We've also introduced twice-annual effective dates for regulations. New regulation affecting businesses now comes into effect twice a year, on January 1 and July 1, helping businesses to plan ahead;

ServiceOntario, in collaboration with Industry Canada, launched a new business info line for business information about federal, provincial and municipal governments, not to mention the new business ID number that is being introduced that will actually use the same ID for the same business across a number of different ministries. This saves time and money for our businesses.

The Open for Business Act continues our effort to make Ontario the best place in North America to do business, and it supports the Open Ontario plan to strengthen our economy.

I want to especially thank some of the members from our business community who join us in the House today to watch what I think really is landmark legislation being tabled—people like Len Crispino, from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce; Ian Howcroft, with the Canadian Manufacturers Association; Ian Kelso, who represents Interactive Ontario, our new digital gaming association; Terry Campbell, from the Canadian Youth Business Foundation; and Paul Mikolich, from the Canadian Steel Producers Association. We thank them for being here and being a big part of the process of the work that went into today's act.

We know that we can protect the public interest without creating unnecessary barriers to business. The Open for Business Act, if passed, would help Ontario businesses focus on what they do best: creating jobs for Ontario families.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'm very pleased to speak about the modernization of approvals contained in the Open for Business bill introduced earlier.

This legislation would, if passed, ensure that the environment is vigorously protected while introducing a modern approvals system. We will not compromise on our duty to protect the environment and human health. We want to enhance our ability to do that, and this bill would accomplish that.

Under the current process, the Ministry of the Environment receives more than 6,000 requests for certificates of approval each year. Our system of environmental approvals has not substantially changed over the last 30 years; it is still completely paper-based. Currently, all applications are received in the same manner, regardless of whether they pose a low or a high risk to our environment. Many are for activities that pose a low risk to the environment and to human health, yet each must go through exactly the same process. We need an updated, modern system that provides better protection and places greater emphasis on applications providing a higher risk.

This bill would introduce a new risk-based approach to environmental approvals. It will allow for the creation of a searchable online registry for activities that pose a lower risk for the environment. It will also allow us to more rigorously issue approvals for complex or unique activities by creating an electronic submission process. It would reduce paper and increase transparency since Ontarians could search online for information about approvals.

It would simplify the process for lower-risk activities and enhance our ability to protect the environment by allowing us to focus our resources on higher-risk activities. This would allow us to concentrate on the environmental outcomes, which is always what it should be about; not the process, but what are the environmental outcomes?

We have consulted widely on this bill, over the past two years, with both industry and the environmental community. We posted our approach on the Environmental Registry and held many round tables with the business community and with environmental organizations. If the legislation is passed, we would gradually roll out the new requirements through tough regulations throughout 2011 and 2012.

We know that all Ontarians want a strong and competitive economy, but we also know that all Ontarians value a healthy and clean environment, and that's what this bill is all about. All of this would be what our proposed new approvals process would achieve.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses? The

member from York Simcoe.

Mrs. Julia Munro: "Open for Business" is what the government calls this bill, but this has not been the case for the last seven years. Six years after it abolished the Red Tape Commission, this government has finally responded to the burden of red tape in Ontario. This bill is the government's attempt to cut red tape.

Establishing the Red Tape Commission was one of the first actions the PC government took in 1995. The commission oversaw the passage of 15 red tape reduction and government efficiency acts since 1995. These acts helped repeal over 80 outdated statutes and amend well over 200 other acts. In addition, the commission worked with ministries and their agencies to remove over 2,000 outdated and unnecessary regulations. After all this work, the McGuinty government killed the Red Tape Commission. Then it spent years ignoring the worries and fears of small business and other citizens caught up in red tape.

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Other provinces followed our actions in Ontario. The Alberta government established a regulatory review secretariat, and the British Columbia government has removed more than 151,000 needless regulations since 2001.

A CFIB survey found that 26% of new business owners would not have set up operation in this province if they had known the red tape burden they would face beforehand.

Be assured that initiatives that make it easier to do business in Ontario will have support, but the minister and the government should not pretend that they have come up with a new idea. If they really want to help small businesses, maybe they should look at their tax hikes, which will kill many service businesses. They should talk to Ontario's convenience store owners, who are trying to make a living; they should talk to career colleges, who face drastic new rules; and they should stop their plan to take \$750 million from pharmacies, large and small. In every one of these cases, it is the actions of this government that have put private sector businesses at

People should know that this government's so-called Open for Business plan comes after this government has repeatedly slammed the doors in the face of small businesses. Open for Business is just this government's attempt to shed its anti-business image less than a year and a half from an election.

Mr. Toby Barrett: As we've just heard, it's no secret that as Ontario PCs, we recognize the tremendous cost of excessive regulation and unnecessary red tape, something that's acutely felt in the environmental business sector. So you can understand our hope when we see a government headline, "New Ontario Law Aims to Relieve 'Headache' for Business." However, you can understand our immediate disappointment when the first media quote that I read from the economic development minister indicates, "This isn't a 'cutting red tape' initiative." So much for the hope.

Bureaucratic red tape and excessive regulation kills

jobs. It's that simple.

Currently, this province is awash in over 500,000 regulations. From what I understand, this economic development bill will slash about 50 from the environment ministry. That's a bit of a start, I guess, but I do remind members that when the announced water plan is introduced, it will be the eighth environmental act under this government.

These are bills that are notorious for associated regulation, and they're now becoming notorious for the accumulative smothering impact of this kind of legis-

lation that drives business out of Ontario.

We had a briefing today—we appreciated that—and we were told this bill would harmonize legislation at federal, provincial and municipal levels. I would applaud that initiative if the government had not made a practice of already duplicating, through environmental legislation, federal government initiatives—the pesticides legislation, for example. Toxics reduction—another duplication. Cap and trade-you're duplicating what's going on in Ottawa.

This bill will introduce a risk-based system. I'm concerned. I asked for a science-based system; that might be a proper way to run an environment ministry.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: We will be keeping a close eye on this legislation. Any legislation that amends more than 100 regulations affecting 10 different provincial departments, including ministries of labour, environment and natural resources, needs very close scrutiny.

New Democrats don't have a problem with making things simpler for companies and organizations to get government approvals required to do business in Ontario.

We are, however, deeply concerned about the changes to the Environmental Protection Act. Based on a quick reading, those are concerns that have been also set out by the Canadian Environmental Law Association, the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy, and Ecojustice.

The minister is touting this as a job-creation measure. However, rather than focusing solely on deregulation measures, New Democrats would focus on various initiatives to directly encourage investments. These include a buy-Ontario policy, encouraging buy-Ontario initiatives. Ontario taxpayer money should be used to create jobs for Ontarians. Ontario needs a comprehensive buy-Ontario program that would ensure that all provincial and municipal government procurement projects give preference to Ontario- and Canadian-made projects. An effective buy-Ontario program would allow smaller Ontario companies, such as those in the green energy sector, to achieve the scale they need to export and successfully compete in global markets, creating good-paying jobs for Ontarians.

We need focused financial incentives. Corporate tax cuts and the harmonized sales tax won't create jobs. High-wage, good-quality jobs can be created by carefully targeting financial incentives towards quality investments in plant, machinery, computer technologies and skills training. New Democrats believe in creating a pro-investment tax regime, a tax regime that directly rewards job-creating investments in plant, machinery, information technology and workplace skills.

There's nothing wrong with providing incentives to businesses to create jobs. The Scandinavian countries and provinces like Quebec and Manitoba have developed effective programs providing highly targeted incentives for investments that lead to high-quality jobs at a fraction of the cost of the McGuinty-style corporate tax cuts. New Democrats would build on the programs developed in pro-investment and socially progressive jurisdictions and develop made-in-Ontario incentives to encourage job-creating investments.

In terms of a forestry and mining strategy, Ontario must create more value-added jobs in the forestry and mining sectors. A value-added strategy in forestry would mean more jobs making hardwood flooring and doors, engineered wood products, cabinets and furniture, and less unprocessed lumber shipped out of the province.

Ontario resource concerns that are willing to commit to their communities deserve a stable and competitive hydro rate, and only the NDP will work with these employers to ensure a competitive hydro rate that will create and protect the kinds of jobs that will sustain communities.

PETITIONS

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Frank Klees: I have a petition that was delivered to me by Gordon Kyle of Community Living Ontario. It

is headed, "Help Reinstate Much-Needed Funding to Developmental Services and Supports in Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

"Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for

other supports;

"Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 70;

"Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

"Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

"Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-

bly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector."

I'm pleased to add my personal signature to this in

support of the appeal to the government.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas multiple sclerosis ... is a debilitating disease affecting a great number of people in Ontario; and

"Whereas there has been a new treatment discovery called the liberation treatment, which addresses chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency ... and that has been seen to provide relief for many MS sufferers,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-

bly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario invest in research regarding this new treatment and make it available to victims of MS in Ontario as a listed procedure in a timely manner."

As I agree with this petition, I will sign it and send it to the table with page Rhett.

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TAXATION

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition from my riding of Durham. This one is from Wilmot Creek, and one of the people who signed it is Madge Cadan. The petition she signed reads as follows:

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

"Whereas, by 2010, Dalton McGuinty's new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and

businesses buy and use every day. A few examples include: coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming; home renovations and home services; veterinary care and pet care; legal services, the sale of resale homes, and funeral arrangements" and the list goes on;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election. However, in 2004, he brought in the health tax, which costs upwards of ... \$900

per individual. And now he is" doing it again;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I'm pleased to sign and support this, and send it down to the table with Ana, one of the new pages.

TAXATION

Mr. Robert Bailey: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from members of my riding.

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004, he brought in the health tax, the biggest tax hike in Ontario's history; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's new 13% sales tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as: ... gas at the pumps; home heating oil and electricity; postage stamps; haircuts; dry cleaning; home renovations; veterinary care; and arena ice and soccer field rentals;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes, once and for all, on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I agree with this, affix my signature and will send it down with Mary.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas multiple industrial wind farm projects are being considered by the government of Ontario in the absence of independent, scientific studies on the longterm effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to put a moratorium on any renewable energy approvals for the construction of industrial wind farms in the province of Ontario until such time as it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms have been fully studied and addressed."

I have affixed my signature to this petition.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

Mr. Frank Klees: I have a petition presented to me by Antonella Talota that contains numerous signatures from parents and speech language pathologists concerned about the long waiting list for speech language therapy in York region. It reads as follows:

"Whereas there are more than 1,000 children in the public and Catholic schools in York region who are on the wait-list for speech-language therapy; and

"Whereas these are children who are struggling with speech and language disorders, which can have serious consequences without timely intervention; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of the Central Community Care Access Centre to assign speech-language pathologists to provide therapy to children on the waitlist, but the McGuinty government has substantially cut funding to the CCAC for speech-language pathology, with the result that children are not being released from the wait-list for treatment; and

"Whereas parents are being told to pay for private therapy if they want timely treatment for their children, but many parents cannot afford the cost of private therapy, with the result that these children are at risk of increased severity of their difficulties, impacting their social and academic skills;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on Premier Dalton McGuinty, the minister responsible for children and youth services, the Minister of Health and LTC and the Minister of Education to intervene immediately to ensure that the Central CCAC develop a plan that will ensure that the more than 1,000 children in need of speech-language therapy in York region receive the necessary treatment."

I'm pleased to affix my personal signature. I know that this is an issue right across the province.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present another group of petitions from my riding of Durham. This one here is about the pharmacy cuts, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our rural pharmacies now."

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents and those around Ontario.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Frank Klees: This petition was delivered to me by local pharmacist Mr. Mike Khalil, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy now."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this. I know it's of great concern to many in my riding, especially seniors.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacies now."

I agree with this and affix my signature to it as well.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, the petitions just keep on coming. This stack of petitions reads as follows. It's a different version of others we've heard here, but I want to share this with you:

"Whereas the McGuinty government has announced that it will impose substantial cuts to pharmacies; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"-reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends;

"—increase wait times and lineups for patients;

"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery; and

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems; and

"Whereas these cuts will mean that some neighbourhood pharmacies will be forced out of business; and

"Whereas pharmacists are willing to work cooperatively with the government to find ways of reducing the cost of health care services and prescription drugs;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call on Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Health to work with Ontario pharmacists to find a fair and reasonable solution to reduce the cost of drugs rather than impose their announced cuts that will have serious consequences to health care services in our community."

I endorse the intent of this petition and affix my signature accordingly.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Frank Klees: if there's no one else, we never run out of petitions in the riding of Newmarket-Aurora. This was just delivered to me this morning:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies"—I wish they'd get the message—"which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy...."

I'm signing this for about the 54th time.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. John O'Toole: These petitions are from my riding of Durham. They read as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for" all of us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario" and Premier McGuinty "as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy now."

I'm pleased to sign and support this, and present it to Luke, one of the pages here, from Leeds—Grenville.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LES ORGANISATIONS SANS BUT LUCRATIF

Ms. Aggelonitis moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-forprofit corporations / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les organisations sans but lucratif.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I'm privileged to rise in the House today for the second reading of the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. I will be sharing my time with the member for Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, my wonderful parliamentary assistant.

I suspect that many of us would agree that, in most cases, rules and regulations put into place 57 years ago would warrant a review. This is the case with Ontario's existing Corporations Act. The current act governs the

incorporation, governance and dissolution of not-forprofit corporations, including charities. It was first enacted in 1907, with the last substantial revision completed in 1953. As you can imagine, many of its provisions are no longer applicable or relevant; others are cumbersome and antiquated. There are also gaps that need to be addressed to create the legal certainties necessary for a not-for-profit to operate efficiently today.

We have heard from many not-for-profit corporations on all of these concerns. Our government understands them. We have listened. We know that the existing legislation no longer meets the needs of Ontario's dynamic, diverse and growing not-for-profit sector. For that reason, we have introduced the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act as a modern legal framework and effective response.

There are currently about 46,000 not-for-profit corporations in Ontario. They work to relieve poverty, to advance education and faith, and to strengthen medical research. They are our museums, art galleries, trade associations, social clubs, sports clubs and environmental groups. They promote awareness of good causes and elevate community involvement and spirit. These unique corporations and their army of volunteers benefit our people and our province in countless ways. Just as important, they generate a massive \$50 billion each and every year in annual revenues and employ about one million people all across the province. Almost eight million people volunteer their valuable time for not-for-profits in communities all across Ontario. Our goal is to support and strengthen this very important sector.

If passed, the proposed legislation would be far simpler to understand than the legislation that currently governs not-for-profit corporations. It would make it easier for organizations to conduct business in today's marketplace and allow them to respond better to the diverse needs of their clients. It would enable Ontario to leap to the forefront as a leader in not-for-profit corporations law, and it would also help build a stronger province for all of us.

Let me turn to the specifics of the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. Our intention with the proposed legislation is to create a modern statute that would be transparent, flexible, efficient and fair and would strengthen the sector. To do this, the act proposes several key reforms. For example, it would expedite and streamline the incorporation process for not-for-profits. Currently, this could take up to six to eight weeks. Our goal is to bring that timeline down to about seven working days or less for a paper application and as little as two days when the online incorporation option is phased in.

The proposed act would update and provide flexibility to the rules that govern the relationship between a corporation and its directors. This would enable corporations to govern themselves more efficiently and enjoy better decision-making structures. We would also clarify the accountability of directors through such provisions as a clear duty of care and a maximum term of office, with an election being held at least every three years. Also, the proposed act would enhance democracy by adding

provisions to ensure that directors act in the corporation's best interests.

Directors would also be provided better protection from personal liability than under the current act. This would include a broad due diligence defence to allow them to rely in good faith on professional advisers and the advice of employees, as well as indemnification and insurance provisions. Not-for-profits need people of insight and expertise on their boards. Giving board members appropriate protection from personal liability would assist non-for-profits to recruit very highly qualified people.

The proposed act would be more flexible in terms of audit requirements and it would also allow a simpler financial review process in place of an audit in specific circumstances. It would also allow not-for-profits to engage in for-profit activities where the revenues are reinvested in support of the corporation's not-for-profit purposes. Currently, organizations are permitted to engage in commercial activities but there is some uncertainty about which profit-generating activities are permitted. The proposed act would provide clarification on these issues. For example, activities that not-for-profit corporations already may engage in include selling recyclable goods in support of an environmental group, a restaurant that employs individuals with health challenges and reinvests those revenues into career development training, and an organization that purchases organic produce from local farmers and redistributes it at a fair price to people who may not have access to healthy food. The ability to engage in commercial activities is important because it can provide not-for-profit corporations with a stable base of funding.

The new act would give Ontario's not-for-profit corporations the benefit of greater legal certainty in carrying out their commercial activities. Finally, the act would become consistent with Canada's Not-for-Profit Corporations Act and with legislation and best practices that currently support the sector in other provinces.

The reform we propose is based on extensive consultation. Over two years, our government released three discussion papers to solicit comments and suggestions on reforms of the Corporations Act. We listened to feedback on the proposed new act from partners representing about 200 organizations during workshops in Ottawa, London, Toronto and Thunder Bay. We established a web advisory panel to consult with key partners on preliminary policy recommendations. We also formed an interministry working group representing 15 ministries in order to reach as broad a stakeholder base as possible.

I would like to thank my colleagues for supporting these efforts and for ensuring comprehensive input to the legislation from a broader government perspective. The proposed Not-for-Profit Corporations Act that we are debating today reflects this feedback. Reaction to the modernization proposal has been and continues to be very positive, and here is what some of the people are saying:

The Ontario Nonprofit Network, Lynn Eakin, says: "The current act has not had a major revision for almost

50 years and needs updating. We were very grateful for the opportunity for the non-profit sector to contribute to the development of modern legislation. This legislation is critical for the sector's long-term well-being."

The Ontario Bar Association, Wayne Gray, says: "A vibrant not-for-profit sector is an important element of Ontario's economic, social, cultural and charitable fabric. New governance legislation will directly benefit approximately 46,000 Ontario organizations operating in the sector and indirectly benefit the many more who depend on the services that these organizations provide through their volunteers, donors, employees and members."

Then a quote from SPORT4ONTARIO, Margaret Emin; she's the chair: "We applaud the McGuinty government's recognition of the rich diversity and value of the Ontario not-for-profit sector and the transparent, inclusive process to solicit input on the modernization of the Ontario Corporations Act. The Ontario sport sector, which together with recreation forms the second largest not-for-profit and voluntary sector in Ontario, welcomes this highly anticipated revised legislation and looks forward to examining the proposed changes, critical to the well-being of our sector." That was, again, Margaret Emin from SPORT4ONTARIO.

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We have heard from many leaders right across the province. We listened, and now we are working together for a much simpler, more relevant and clearer act.

As you know, the McGuinty government has committed to modernizing Ontario's business laws. This is necessary to meet all the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. It is our responsibility as leaders to ensure that Ontario attracts investment and jobs, remains an efficient place to do business and is able to effectively compete in a global economy. Modernizing the Corporations Act and the laws that govern the not-for-profit sector is an important part of that process. It would further enhance the efficiency of Ontario's business laws. It would also support our government's Open for Business initiative.

The proposed legislation would reduce the regulatory burden on organizations; ensure that government services, such as the processing of applications, are delivered in a faster and smarter way; and streamline operational and administrative requirements.

As a final point, it would also align with our government's poverty reduction strategy. This is a priority for our government, and we work in partnership with many not-for-profits all across Ontario that are dedicated to helping the most vulnerable. We see their good work each and every day. These are the organizations that help feed the hungry, house the homeless, help children who are living in poverty do well in school and gain the opportunities they need to succeed, and support the children's parents when they need a helping hand.

Our proposed legislation would facilitate the effective operations of these fine organizations and help them to do more of the good work that they do so well. Supporting Ontario's not-for-profit organizations is an important part of the government's Open Ontario plan to grow key sectors of the economy and create a climate where businesses can thrive.

The 46,000 not-for-profit corporations across Ontario deserve a modern statute that reflects their unique characteristics and complexities. They deserve to have certainty and clarity in their operations as they work to benefit Ontarians and to contribute to the economic strength of our great province. They deserve to be able to grow in the best way possible. By moving forward on the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, this Legislature and this province would be supporting their strength and success. We would be providing this vibrant and innovative sector with the legislation it needs to progress in the 21st century. We would be taking another step forward in modernizing corporate and commercial statutes for the benefit of Ontario's businesses and not-for-profit communities. If this legislation is passed, we would be building a stronger Ontario.

Mr. Jim Brownell: I'm honoured to rise in the House today to support the Minister of Consumer Services on the proposed Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. As parliamentary assistant to the minister and MPP for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, I know first-hand the importance of not-for-profit organizations and the reform that is necessary to help our partners in this sector operate effectively.

If passed, this legislation would provide a modern legal framework to better address the needs of Ontario's 46,000 not-for-profit corporations. It would make it easier for them to operate in today's world, as well as strengthen the overall sector.

Reform is long overdue; let me explain with a bit of history. As the Minister of Consumer Services has said, Ontario's not-for-profit sector is currently guided by the provisions of the existing Corporations Act. This legislation was enacted in 1907. It was set up to apply to all types of corporations, including not-for-profit, business, insurance and mining. It has not been substantially revised since 1953. Since then, there have been only small amendments.

Through the 1970s, the province introduced separate statutes to govern business corporations; however, the act was not updated to reflect this fundamental change, nor the many other changes over the decades in this sector. The result: For decades, large parts of the Corporations Act have been outdated. Not-for-profit corporations have told the Ministry of Consumer Services that they have been forced to piece together provisions of the act that apply to them. As you can imagine, this makes it difficult to use. Even lawyers have told the ministry that they on occasion find it difficult to locate the applicable law.

There are also other significant gaps. For instance, the current act lacks provisions that set out the duty and standard of care of directors and officers. There are no statutory defences for them against personal liability. It lacks a complete set of rules to address director and member meetings. Further, it is not consistent with the newer legislation in place in other Canadian jurisdictions. Basically, it is outdated legislation.

Our government wants to modernize the outdated legislation. Ontario's not-for-profits deserve fair, comprehensive and up-to-date laws that enable them to operate well in a modern world. The proposed Not-for-Profit Corporations Act would meet the need. If passed, this legislation would offer clarity and completeness. It would follow a logical order. It would address a range of issues, from incorporation to corporate governance to members' rights and protections to defences for directors and officers to dissolution. It would be a welcome improvement for this sector.

Some might wonder what constitutes a not-for-profit corporation in Ontario under the current legislation, the Corporations Act. There are three key elements: first, it is an organization that carries on its activities without the purpose of gain for its members; second, it is incorporated as a corporation that does not issue shares; and third, it must have not-for-profit purposes and use any profits that it makes to promote these purposes. These are the facts, but as we all know, not-for-profits are so much more than the sum of their parts. From daycare centres to food banks, from social clubs to service clubs, from professional groups to neighbourhood associations, these organizations are the heart and soul of our communities. They make remarkable contributions to our society, our people and our economy, and they are vital to the strength and success of our province.

Let me address some of the key reforms of the proposed Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. I'll begin with the incorporation process. Under the current legislation, incorporation of not-for-profits is a long and cumbersome process. In fact, its complexity leads to the rejection of about 35% of applications simply because of errors. As you can imagine, this causes significant delays and added costs as applications are returned for revision. Under the proposed legislation, the incorporation process would be fast, efficient and streamlined. Timelines would be reduced from six to eight weeks to approximately seven working days or less. It would be cost-effective. Eventually, it would enable electronic registration options including online incorporation, which would be even faster.

Additionally, corporations would be entitled to incorporate as of right if they comply with the requirements of the proposed act and its regulations. That is, if a corporation meets certain requirements, it is entitled to be incorporated. Under the current system, incorporation is discretionary.

Next, there is concern over corporate governance provisions as they currently stand under the Corporations Act. Our partners in the sector have asked for more certainty on issues such as accountability. They would welcome a reduced burden and more flexibility to deal with the realities of today's not-for-profit sector. Under the proposed act, we would address these concerns. Accountability would be strengthened, for example, by the provision of regular elections. We would set the term of office for directors at a three-year maximum, with no limit on the number of times they may be re-elected. New

provisions in the act would address gaps and clarify rules such as the duty of care for directors. Directors would be required to exercise the care, diligence and skill that reasonably prudent persons would in comparable circumstances.

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Third, member democracy would be strengthened. If passed, the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act would expand remedies to require directors to act in the best interests of the corporation. For instance, a member could obtain a compliance order if the corporation or its directors and officers fail to comply with duties as set out in the proposed act, its regulations, articles and bylaws.

Fourth, there is currently no limit on the liability of directors. This liability certainly acts as a deterrent for talented directors to serve on the boards. If passed, our new act would increase liability protection by adding a broad due-diligence defence, which includes good-faith reliance. This allows directors to rely on professionals and skilled managers for advice.

Next, most not-for-profits that are operating today must conduct a full, often expensive audit unless they meet onerous exemption rules. The proposed legislation would provide the flexibility to conduct a less expensive financial review or obtain an audit exemption. This would be based on specific circumstances, such as revenue thresholds and the type of corporation. Public benefit corporations, which include charities, would be held to a higher standard than non-public benefit corporations. It's a practical change that would relieve smaller corporations of the higher financial and administrative burdens associated with an audit. It would also help increase compliance of not-for-profits with requirements for financial reviews.

Sixth, while not-for-profit corporations in Ontario are currently permitted to engage in commercial activity, there is some uncertainty over what activities are permitted. If passed, the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act would clarify that organizations can engage in commercial activities in support of their not-for-profit purposes, as long as the revenue is returned to the organization. This might include, for example, operating a restaurant or a clothing store in order to provide people who are otherwise unemployable with job skills and basic income.

Finally, as you may have heard, the federal government enacted the new Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act last year. Our proposed act would, if passed, become consistent with the federal act. Both would provide, for example, a clear and easy structure to follow, a simplified incorporation process and enhanced member remedies.

Our provisions would also be broadly consistent with those of other Canadian provinces that have introduced modern legislation to govern not-for-profits, such as the province of Saskatchewan.

I would like to clarify which organizations would and would not be affected by our proposed reform.

All not-for-profit organizations that are incorporated in Ontario under the Corporations Act would be affected.

As I stated previously, there are about 46,000 organizations.

There are some types of not-for-profits operating in Ontario that would not be impacted. These include not-for-profit co-operative corporations, not-for-profits that are incorporated federally, and unincorporated not-for-profit organizations.

Additionally, some not-for-profits are incorporated through other special private or public acts. For example, the Corporations Act does not apply to municipal corporations. Therefore, municipalities would not be affected by our proposed reform.

With respect to charities, our proposed legislation would govern their incorporation, governance and dissolution, but not their regulation. This would fall to the Ministry of the Attorney General.

It would also facilitate the activities of not-for-profit social enterprise corporations in Ontario. Not-for-profit social enterprise corporations, which are organizations with specific social or environmental goals, would be permitted to engage with no restrictions in commercial activities to advance or support their not-for-profit purposes.

Our government engaged in thorough consultation while developing the legislation we are debating today. Three consultation papers were made available to over 1,100 stakeholders. Regional meetings were held in Ottawa, London, Toronto and Thunder Bay, and were attended by representatives of approximately 200 organizations. A web advisory panel engaged in an online consultation with key stakeholders.

There was widespread agreement among the sector that modernization was necessary, and our government has received very positive feedback for our initiative in undertaking the reform, as well as for the direction we propose. I would like to recognize the interministerial working group of 15 ministries that has worked closely with our ministry and provided an important crossgovernment perspective for the legislation. Should the bill pass, we would continue to work closely with this team to assist our partners in understanding the new laws.

As you know, our government has committed to a business modernization initiative. We have enacted the Securities Transfer Act. We have updated the Ontario Business Corporations Act and Personal Property Security Act, and made amendments to various other related statutes. Now we propose to modernize the law for not-for-profit corporations. The combined effect of these changes would establish Ontario as a leading jurisdiction in business law. The Not-for-Profit Corporations Act would also support our government's Open for Business initiative by streamlining operational and administrative requirements and processing applications more efficiently. It would also align with Ontario's poverty reduction strategy.

There are thousands of not-for-profit organizations across the province that are dedicated to improving the lives of vulnerable children and families who live in poverty. This act would make it easier for them and for

all of Ontario's unique and diverse not-for-profit organizations to operate and conduct business in today's marketplace. Ontario's not-for-profit sector contributes greatly to our society, our communities and our province. The sector is crucial to those who depend upon the diverse services that its organizations provide. It is vital to our economy, generating about \$50 billion in annual revenues and employing almost one million Ontarians—so important for the economy. Our government is committed to strengthening this sector that offers so much to so many.

We urge all members of the House to support the new, modern Not-for-Profit Corporations Act by approving this bill

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm very pleased to acknowledge second reading of Bill 65, which—a lot of people should really be patient here and not assume anything. The talk is at a very high, non-concerning level, but there are 17 different sections—quite an intricate piece of work here; 108 pages. It does deal with a couple of things. I'm not finished reading and I have not been briefed on it, but I'm waiting and listening to the debate. The section here about the liabilities: I'd perhaps like the minister—this is very important for non-profit organizations to not be burdened. Under the governance model, it's clear that the appointment of directors is under part IV, quorum, and the need to have membership. I think people who volunteer, mainly, for these organizations are usually community builders. As such, often they face liabilities which are—I suspect in the corporate world they're absolutely protecting against liability; it's important. And if they can avoid huge legal costs in these not-for-profit environments, I would be very supportive of that section for sure.

If you look at the "Auditors" and "Financial disclosure" requirements in parts VII and VIII, they're very important. I haven't completely read them yet but, again, it's very much like in part IX, where it talks about the ability to borrow, the ability to create debt and obligations, and to charge dues and memberships. Those are appropriate, and most often happen today in those organizations, but not always. Persons can be directors who aren't members, which is often the case. They bring in experts who bring a specialty to the organization, who are often, again, volunteers who contribute and make them worthy organizations.

So there's a lot in this. I hope it's all good, but I'm always troubled when they bring in these large omnibus types of bills saying that they're going to do all these good things, and at the end of the day the minister—she's new on the job and I'm sure she needs to be briefed on it as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Kormos: I listened carefully to the leads by the government minister and parliamentary assistant. I was pleased to be able to do it. I'm going to have a chance to speak to this in short order, and I want to be able to say things about the bill as I read it. I'm eager to hear the member for Whitby—Oshawa and her comments on the bill.

1430

So far, this seems like a relatively benign proposition, and that's a good thing. I wouldn't expect anything less from this minister. On the part of the New Democrats, I can indicate that we don't want to see this thing spend a whole lot of time at second reading. It's important to get it into committee and let the real world out there address it. Let's find out if there are any areas in the bill that need speaking to or some tweaking, if you will, and then we should do that.

I will have some comments to make about the government's insistence that this is somehow part of a poverty reduction strategy. I understand that the people who write these things are doing their best to get good spin and to wring out as much as they can from it, kind of like wringing out a dish cloth, but sometimes that towel is dry. Sometimes the pitcher is empty. No matter how much you shake it or clang it, short of spitting in it, you ain't going to get anything into it.

I hear the minister, and I take her at her word, of course. I hear the parliamentary assistant, and the same will go for him on this one. The poverty reduction strategy: I'm starting to get a little bit suspicious that maybe there's some hyperbole going on here, but after all, if hyperbole can't take place here, where can it?

I'm looking forward to hearing the official opposition's response, and then I'm looking forward to making my own on behalf of New Democrats.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: As the member from Durham pointed out, a number of people who get involved in the boards of not-for-profits are the volunteers of our communities.

For myself, my first experience with the not-for-profit sector was as the co-founder of some farm women's organizations in this province. One of the things that we found we needed to do was incorporate, and we did so. It wouldn't have stopped us from continuing with the work we did, but I think had our partners at home known the kind of personal liability that we were putting on their farm operations by the fact that we were then part of a not-for-profit corporation, it would have made them, I think, exceptionally nervous. In terms of recruiting volunteers to sit on these boards and become part of that, when you consider the possibility and the potential of personal liability, it is certainly something that would keep good people from considering doing that kind of thing, and that's very important if we're going to move forward.

When I see that the act itself hasn't been substantially revised or amended since 1953, I think we also have a situation now where people have different expectations. If you're a member of a not-for-profit organization, there may have been a time when you trusted the board to do

the right thing, and you assumed that they were doing the right thing. Under this act, we're now talking about the fact that there is more accountability necessary, and I think most members of not-for-profits have those expectations.

Even in our own constituency office, we sometimes have people who question what is happening with the not-for-profits. By going through and working at this bill and bringing this forward, we are now going to address that kind of accountability for our constituents as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: This is an interesting piece of legislation. Unfortunately, we haven't had an opportunity to caucus this bill. It was introduced last Wednesday.

I found it interesting, on the point of privilege that was being debated this morning, that the House leader brought up the point that that point of privilege had only been introduced at a quarter after 10 in the morning, and she really didn't have time to peruse the point and to make intelligent comment on it.

Here we are in the same situation. The vast majority of bills that come into this House are introduced on a Wednesday or a Thursday, and the first day of debate is prior to the Tuesday, which is our caucus day. People in our party and the third party don't have an opportunity to caucus the bill and to get some sense from the expertise sitting around the room as to what the consequences of this bill are.

Some of the points that are in this bill are certainly dealing with non-profit organizations, the local organizations that support volunteers and various aspects of any community. I think of my own communities and the huge number of people who volunteer their time. I'm sure that Ontario is in the forefront of the communities that volunteer their time across the world, and that time is spent enhancing the lifestyle that our communities have. Without the volunteers we wouldn't be as rich a community as we are.

Those organizations from which those volunteers work do need some fiscal responsibility injected into them, and I hope this bill makes it easier, not more difficult, for those organizations to exist.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The Minister of Consumer Services has up to two minutes to respond.

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I want to thank my parliamentary assistant from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, as well as the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, the member from Durham, the member from Welland and of course, the member from Halton.

As a fairly new member of this House, it truly is a privilege to be able to listen to everyone in the House. You get some great feedback from the members opposite. I just wanted to say that I really, really appreciate your comments.

What this bill is really about is—it's an old act. We haven't substantially changed it in 57 years. It's a \$50-billion industry where there are so many people working,

and many of them are, of course, here in Ontario. We want to make it easier. We want to get rid of the antiquated bill and we want it to not be cumbersome.

Interjection.

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I appreciate the member from Durham, who still wants to speak on this. I can't wait for when he gets his briefing, which will be very soon.

What this bill is about is simplifying the incorporation process. It's not going to take six to eight weeks anymore; it'll take less than seven days. It is a good bill. It's a bill for our not-for-profits, which are doing a fabulous job for Ontarians.

We are going to make sure that this bill enhances corporate governance and accountability. It's going to provide directors and other officers better protection from personal liability. It's an important bill for all of us. Again, I appreciate all the members who spoke and I look forward to the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 65, the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. I want to just say at this time that I will be sharing my time with the member for Whitby—Oshawa.

As is becoming increasingly common with this government, bills are being introduced with little time to prepare for debate or to study their contents, as others have already mentioned. Consequently, I am not prepared to commit today to supporting or opposing this bill on behalf of our party. This last-minute rush is also interesting when we consider that the government did its consultations to prepare for this bill in 2007 and 2008. Why wasn't it introduced years, or at least months, ago? It's certainly an interesting question, a question that I'm sure one of the government members will be able to explain.

Nevertheless, this is an important bill and we need to make sure that it suits the needs of non-profit organizations. We need to hear from the non-profit sector, from its clients and customers, its participants and from the general public before we commit to this bill. I am certainly supportive of the concept of making it easier for non-profits to organize and operate; we just need to ensure that this bill will in fact accomplish these goals.

To begin my remarks, I would like to consider why we have non-profit organizations and why they are such an important force in our society. As a Conservative, I believe that most decisions are best made by individuals making their choices in a free market. For most companies, that means selling their products or services to make a profit. With those companies that are inefficient or selling things that people don't want, that means going out of business or changing how they operate. People work to make a profit because they can use profit to better their own lives and the lives of their families and their children. They make decisions on where to work, what to buy and how to live based on their own best judgments about their economic self-interest. This im-

pulse is good. It encourages people to work, to create and to come up with new ideas and concepts. Prosperity would come from this impulse and, I would argue, only from this impulse.

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Yet, economic advancement is not the only impulse that drives individuals. People have an impulse to help others, to express their faith and to join together in causes, celebrations and common goals. This is where what we call the not-for-profit sector comes into play. This is all a part of what Edmund Burke refers to as the little platoons of society: "To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country, and to mankind."

Citizens connect with one another in little platoons, whether they are religious groups, charities, local hockey leagues or the fall fair. Society is built firstly on the responsibilities and rights of individuals, but also on all these little platoons that people join to make the lives of others better.

In an age when we so often seem to be isolated or segmented from others, these organizations are vital in maintaining the health of our families and our communities. We all know very well that volunteering is not just about giving. It's also about what you get: the connection with other people and the world around you.

"Not-for-profit" is actually a poor name for this sector. Other names include civil society or the voluntary sector. The emphasis on not making a profit actually obscures the importance of the sector and sets up a false conflict between non-profit agencies and the free market. To me, non-profit organizations are a full part of the free market, as they can only exist when individuals decide to band together in pursuit of a common goal.

I know I would put my trust in the collective and individual wisdom of millions of Ontarians making their own decisions about how they live their lives, spend their money and use their time. Nevertheless, it is the government that must set up the rules for non-profits, so we in this House must all work to get them right. These rules must be clear, easy for non-profits to meet and limited in their cost to non-profits in money, time and expertise. They must ensure that non-profits are accountable to their members and clients for how money is spent. Non-profits are an important part of what is now called civil society, and many people now use the term instead of non-profit.

Imagine Canada, a charity and non-profit research group, has provided some good statistical information on the non-profit sector. The first point is that Canada's non-profit and voluntary sector is the second-largest in the world. The largest is the Netherlands, and the United States is fifth. I should add, of course, that this is in relation to population. There are an estimated 161,000 non-profits and charities in Canada. Half of these—in fact, 54%—are run entirely by volunteers. Two million people are employed by these organizations, representing

11% of the economically active population. The sector represents \$79.1 billion, or 7.8%, of the GDP, which by the way is larger than the automotive or manufacturing industries. Smaller provinces have an even higher number of organizations relative to their populations. The top 1% of organizations command 60% of all revenues.

Supporting non-profits and the voluntary sector has always been a priority for the Progressive Conservative Party. In 1995, Premier Mike Harris directed me to conduct a review of the voluntary sector in Ontario. Here is how the website charityvillage.com describes the

process we went through:

"The new Ontario government's speech from the throne in September 27, 1995, contained a directive from the Premier to Julia Munro, his parliamentary assistant and MPP for Durham-York, to do something to foster volunteer activity in Ontario. To determine what should/could be done, Munro created an 11-member advisory board ... with Sally Horsfall as chair. Given its duties to both determine the facts and make recommendations, the board was not unlike a commission of inquiry.

"Beginning with 10 first principles ... the discussion paper addresses how the voluntary sector can adapt to its changing role in society by examining what goals it shares with government and business. Here it sees the critical importance of volunteerism to civic society flowing from its aid to the public good, the idea being that volunteerism springs from citizenship and social responsibility. 'As the voluntary sector continues to evolve and grow, it will be shaped by an understanding of our concern, respect, compassion and obligation to one another within society,' the document reads. Government's function, meanwhile, is the protection of the public good. This, the paper suggests, provides a mutual and enduring foundation, even though the relationship between the two is changing. Government would be wise to forget about managing the voluntary sector and focus instead on removing any obstacles to its growth, an initiative that would lead to eventual self-government by the sector. The paper notes that such a development would require voluntary organizations to collaborate while competing for resources.

"A redefinition of the relationship between government and the voluntary sector, the paper suggests, might see government funding essential services provided by the voluntary sector.... Further, the government could agree not to transfer responsibilities to the sector without concomitant funding. Another suggestion is to involve the voluntary sector in the development of relevant government policies, which is precisely what the advisory board is doing, or designating a cabinet minister

responsible for the voluntary sector.

"On a practical level, government could try to eliminate barriers to the use of public resources ... get insurance companies to stop penalizing voluntary organizations that hire people with disabilities, and make representations to Ottawa on federal tax legislation affecting voluntary organizations.

"The relationship between the voluntary sector and business also requires redefinition, says the discussion paper. More businesses should be encouraged to invest in the voluntary sector by way of acknowledging their role as partners in the community; they should be made to see the benefit of supporting community well-being which in turn would have them recognize the value of reciprocal relationships and resource sharing with the voluntary sector.

"Encouraging voluntarism among employees and establishing minimum standards for corporate donations are two objectives, but in a newly defined relationship, business should recognize that it has more to give than staff and money; there are also physical resources, leadership, training and expertise. Businesses should be able to claim for tax purposes the wages paid employees while working as volunteers.

"If there is a key word in the discussion paper, it is change. Society is changing, government is changing, business is changing. Therefore, the clear message is that whether it wants to or not, the volunteer sector must change to remain relevant. Change presents both obstacle and opportunity. For example, the paper notes, an aging population creates more demand for services, but it also provides a larger volunteer pool. As well, high unemployment creates more demand for services, but also brings volunteers looking for work experience that will lead them to a paying job.

"The vision for the voluntary sector of the future,' says the paper, 'is one where it has the position of equivalent stature and reciprocity with other sectors of our society. In this position, the voluntary sector would seem to have valuable resources and expertise that not only warrant support from the public, government and business, but also have much to contribute to those segments of society.

"Within this vision, voluntary organizations will be particularly skilled in networking and building bridges—within the voluntary sector and outside. Within the sector, organizations will collaborate to build a common voice that can speak with strength and cohesiveness on issues that cut across the sector. Outside the sector, voluntary organizations will be acknowledged partners in the workplace and in government policy development processes."

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I think much of what the advisory board reported on in the 1990s still holds up today. The importance of these issues, when we consider this bill and non-profits in general, is the human motivation behind their existence. As I said earlier, non-profits cannot drive prosperity in Ontario; for this we need competitive business. But they meet the motivations and needs that our economic system often cannot address.

In the recent UK election campaign, now-Prime Minister David Cameron described what he called his Big Society proposal. His ideas illustrate the importance he places on the non-profit sector and how it could meet many of his country's problems. Here is how the UK Conservative Party described the plan in March:

"Conservatives seek to build a Big Society based on responsibility and respect, in stark contrast with Labour's big government built on paternalism and waste.

"Speaking at a conference on the Big Society today, David Cameron and 11 members of the shadow cabinet set out how a Conservative government would give power to neighbourhood groups and boost social action.

"It is a guiding philosophy,' Cameron said, 'a society where the leading force for progress is social responsibility, not state control.

"'It includes a whole set of unifying approaches—breaking state monopolies, allowing charities, social enterprises and companies to provide public services, devolving power down to neighbourhoods, making government more accountable.

"And it's the thread that runs consistently through our whole policy program—our plans to reform public services, mend our broken society, and rebuild trust in politics."

"The new policies announced as part of the Big

Society plan include:

"[A] neighbourhood army of 5,000 full-time, professional community organizers who will be trained with the skills they need to identify local community leaders, bring communities together, help people start their own neighbourhood groups, and give communities the help they need to take control and tackle their problems. This plan is directly based on the successful community organizing movement established by Saul Alinsky in the United States and has successfully trained generations of community organizers, including President Obama.

"A Big Society bank, funded from unclaimed bank assets, which will leverage private sector investment to provide hundreds of millions of pounds of new finance for neighbourhood groups, charities, social enterprises and other non-governmental bodies.

"Neighbourhood grants for the UK's poorest areas to encourage people to come together to form neighbourhood groups and support social enterprises and charities in these poorest areas....

"Launching an annual national Big Society Day to celebrate the work of neighbourhood groups and encourage more people to take part in social action projects.

"Providing new funding to support the next generation of social entrepreneurs, and helping successful social enterprises to expand and succeed."

I think what the British Conservatives have recognized is that a vital sector exists between government and business, one that needs cultivation and support. In a nation that has experienced wide ideological swings in weeks and decades, I think the British example where their leaders are going today gives us some interesting ideas to pursue as we develop policies for Ontario.

As part of the justification for this bill, this government claims it forms part of its poverty reduction strategy. I have great difficulty making that stretch between what is effectively going to deal with boards of directors and their legal liabilities and the problem that we see all around us in our communities where we have issues around mental health and children in need and so many areas. The Poverty Reduction Act just seems a long way away from an act that deals with boards and their responsibilities.

The Poverty Reduction Act itself, of course, was something of a smoke-and-mirrors exercise because all it requires that the government do is to devise a strategy and to write reports on how well it's meeting its own strategy. It doesn't pull a single person out of poverty.

I know that the government received the support of many of the poverty groups for the poverty bill, a bill which offered hope without any dollars attached. If Bill 65 is supposed to help the government meet its poverty reduction strategy, it is not a very high bar to meet.

I think this bill is necessary and could help non-profits. The government should not mix it up with the gesture politics of its Poverty Reduction Act. There are real needs that need to be met in Ontario, issues such as children's mental health, as I mentioned. This bill is important in revising the rules, but the government should certainly not try to stretch that this is also going to directly assist those in need.

One of the priorities, as we look at this legislation, is whether or not it will encourage the creation and growth of non-profits in Ontario and whether these new organizations will meet the needs they claim to alleviate. To do this, I recommend that a step be added, preferably as an amendment, to the bill. We need a follow-up review to study the effectiveness of these changes, to report to this House in two or three years to tell us: Has the time to register a non-profit been cut and by how much? Has the amount non-profits, particularly small ones, have to spend on auditing and meeting government rules decreased, and by how much? Do we have more nonprofits? Are people more willing to sit on community boards? Has the liability fear actually been decreased? Are non-profits successfully meeting their goals, whether charitable or social?

This bill should have an accountability mechanism written into the text, as indeed, I would argue, most bills should. We need to know if it has been effective so that the Legislature can make any necessary changes in a few years' time. We also need to know if this bill will work to make non-profits accountable to their own members and to the public. How much revenue goes to overhead, particularly in charitable non-profits? Both government and the non-profits themselves need to be completely transparent and accountable.

I look forward to the continued debate on this bill and to hearing from non-profits and the general public during the committee hearing process. The government should hold hearings outside Queen's Park, as well as in this building. We need to hear the voices of non-profits from throughout Ontario, not just in Toronto. We need to know from non-profits how the changes in the bill will affect them.

Is there enough variation to take into account the needs of small groups, as well as large ones? I think

that's an extremely important aspect of the contemplation of this bill because, in taking the entire non-profit sector, you are looking at very, very sophisticated, national-style organizations to very small community organizations. I think that it's very important that through the committee process and responses to those concerns, we make sure that the needs of the whole range of non-profits are taken into account.

What are the cost implications? Will non-profits have to spend large sums of money on legal advice to meet the requirements of this new bill? We do not yet know the answers to these questions; only the non-profits can tell us.

I look forward to committee hearings, which, I assume, will be held this summer. The government makes the point that the regulation of non-profits has not changed substantially since the 1950s. It is important that we get this right, particularly if the sector needs to wait another 50 years for the next revision.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I am very pleased to add a few comments on Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-for-profit corporations, and to add a few comments to those of the member from York–Simcoe, my colleague, who made a very cogent argument for hearings in this matter and for this bill, of course, to be modernized.

1500

I do have some familiarity with the Corporations Act from my past life before being elected to this Legislature. In my capacity as a lawyer in private practice, I did have the occasion to incorporate a number of not-for-profit and charitable corporations under this act. I would certainly agree with the minister when she said it's a very old act and it needs to be modernized. There is no question about that.

But I do have a couple of questions. Part of the problem, again, with this bill coming forward—and it has been mentioned by several of my colleagues on this side of the House—is the fact that we simply don't have enough time to give the bills that are coming before us the kind of thoughtful and reasonable examination that I think the members of the public would expect we would do with several of the issues we've been dealing with which are of significant magnitude.

In this case, it's no different from any others. This is an old bill. It does need to be modernized, but there are some new parts to it that I think require further examination, though I'm not in a position right now to come definitively down in favour or not in favour. I think, generally speaking, what we've been hearing is that this is necessary. The stakeholders seem to be thinking that this is an important piece of legislation and they're onside with it. So I think it's all the more reason that we need to get this matter into committee and be able to understand all of the ramifications of the act.

For the purposes of those people who may be following this debate in the Legislature and are wondering what kind of corporation it is we're talking about, I'd just like to clarify a little bit the kinds of corporations we're

dealing with. Essentially there are two basic kinds: the share capital corporation and the non-share capital corporation.

The share capital corporation is what we would typically refer to as a business corporation, where you become a voting member by purchasing a share and you become a shareholder in the corporation. That's not the kind of act that we're dealing with here. There is a separate statute that governs that called the Business Corporations Act.

What we're dealing with here is non-share capital corporations, where you don't get a share in the corporation; you become a member of the corporation. So it's a very different kind of animal. Then, within that subcategory, there are non-share capital corporations which are non-profit corporations and those which are charitable corporations—again, another fairly significant difference, because a non-profit corporation would be formed for something like a baseball or a hockey association, where you really just need a legal structure in order for the association to be able to carry on its business. That's very different than a charitable corporation, which is a non-profit with a much higher level of responsibility. With a charitable corporation, all of the purposes of the charitable corporation have to be entirely charitable in nature, and it's a fairly narrow category of charitable purposes that will fall into this category. It has to be for religious purposes, educational purposes or the advancement of the community—pretty defined, and then that has to go before the scrutiny, of course, of the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency to determine federally whether that is a corporation that is deemed to be worthy of being granted a charitable registration, which of course allows it to issue charitable tax receipts.

With this bill, we're talking about both non-profit corporations and charitable corporations, the structure of which is deemed to be formed by members rather than by shares.

So here we're looking at the act that, as the minister mentioned, was originally enacted in 1907 and hasn't been substantially revised since 1953. In the meantime, the world has changed substantially. There was no provision in the old act for electronic registration, for voting, for meetings and for all kinds of other things. This act simply modernizes, streamlines and simplifies the incorporation process.

It is quite important in today's economy because we are dealing with a fast-growing sector of both non-profit and charitable corporations, both of which employ a lot of people in our economy. I think when you're trying to encourage volunteer giving and volunteer involvement, you need to have a statute that is going to be able to keep up with the times.

Right now, we have some 46,000 non-profit organizations operating in Ontario. We want to make sure that they're all able to do the good work they do each and every day in our community. This act, hopefully, will help.

It governs the creation, the governance and the dissolution of these corporations and has a number of boilerplate provisions dealing with members, categories of members, how you can vote, how you elect directors and so on. It's pretty technical stuff, but there are a couple of things in the bill that I would just like to highlight and that I think are quite favourable and that I'm very much in favour of.

One is just the incorporation itself. The minister mentioned that it used to take six to eight weeks in order to be able to incorporate a charitable or non-profit corporation. Under the new act, this will be streamlined and can be completed by way of submitting articles of incorporation, along with any other necessary documents—a name-search report and so on—along with the requisite fee. This can be done as a matter of right, which is different than previously, where incorporation was up to the discretion of the Minister of Government Services—whether he or she wished to have this corporation be incorporated in the first place. So that's very positive.

Secondly, under the old act you would have to prepare operating resolutions and bylaws in order to be able to operate the corporation. In fact, what happened—and it's a little bit unfortunate—was that a lot of organizers, when they got their charitable number or their name incorporated, that's sort of where things ended. They didn't go through and do the indoor housekeeping to set up the corporation properly. In this case, what the act provides for is that if, after 60 days, you have not prepared those opening bylaws and resolutions, there are some default organizational bylaws approved by the director that are deemed to have applied. In other words, that corporate structure will be set up for you. If you don't have one by default, you get the standard boilerplate that the ministry approves. I think that's positive, because then you have an actual operating structure to work with. In this respect it's very similar to the old Partnerships Act, where rules and regulations were deemed to apply in situations where you might not have gotten around to actually doing it. So that's also good.

Directors and officers: Again, it changes the law somewhat regarding directors' liabilities and the standard of care. First of all, it sets it out very clearly and requires directors "to act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the corporation and to exercise the care, diligence and skill that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in comparable."

The one change here that I would say is different from the common law, which this encapsulates now in the act, is that "directors are given a reasonable diligence defence, including reliance on officers and employees of the corporation and on professional advice." By professional advice, they're primarily referring to financial advice. So if directors are given financial advice by the auditors or the accountants of the corporation, they're entitled to rely on that as long as they're acting in a reasonably prudent matter and they won't incur any personal liability as a result of acting on that advice. I think that that's probably good in that sense, but I'm just

wondering how far that responsibility will go. I look forward to making some inquiries with respect to that once we get the matter in committee.

As I've indicated, most of the stakeholders whom I've had an opportunity to speak with so far-and I haven't had a chance to, of course, fully canvass them, but certainly the Ontario Bar Association is supportive, both from the business corporations section of the association as well as the charities and not-for-profit section. They also said, and I think I would certainly credit the minister with this, that there was significant consultation with respect to this bill before it was brought forward. I'm quite pleased to hear that, because that doesn't always happen in this place. But I've also heard that further consultation, and probably amendment, is necessary in order to move this bill from being good to being excellent. It's already well thought out, but there is some further amendment and due consideration that's needed in order to make sure that this bill is going to be good to move forward for the next 100 years or so-long past the time I'm going to be around, anyway.

I do think that the thrust of the bill is important. It's good. We are modernizing the bill. I do have some questions, though, that I would like to raise on just a few of the issues.

1510

One is with the newly defined public benefit corporation. This is something new that was not allowed for under the previous act. I've been told that this shouldn't change things too significantly from what we already have. It's defined as:

- "(a) a charitable corporation, or
- "(b) a non-charitable corporation that receives more than \$10,000 in a financial year,
- "(i) in the form of donations or gifts from persons who are not members, directors, officers or employees of the corporation, or
- "(ii) in the form of grants or similar financial assistance from the federal government or a provincial or municipal government or an agency of any such government."

So it is a newly defined structure.

If you refer back to section 8, it talks about how the purposes can be commercial, to a certain degree, as long as the commercial purpose of the corporation "is intended only to advance or support one or more of the non-profit purposes of the corporation."

I'm really curious to hear from stakeholders about how this will actually work, because once you start mixing the for-profit, commercial nature of a by-nature non-profit organization, I'm a little confused about how that's going to work, and I want to make sure that—

Mr. Peter Kormos: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Is there a quorum?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I would ask the clerk to do a count.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): A quorum is present.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): A quorum is present. Please continue with the debate.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Again, my question is with respect to the public benefit corporation: I want to make sure that when we have charitable corporations and non-profit corporations—I certainly understand that to some extent, in order to be able to do the work they do, they need to be able to do things like fundraise for their organization and so on, but I think we have to be very cognizant of the fact that there need to be some boundaries to that, to make sure they're acting for the purposes for which they were intended and also to make sure that improper elements don't creep in. I look forward to fleshing that out in committee.

Secondly, section 173 deals with fraud investigation. I think that's a very positive development; we need to have a mechanism. We've all read in the newspapers recently about concerns with fraud and improper activity, particularly in charitable corporations. We all want to make sure we can maintain the integrity of these corporations and that the hugely good work done by the vast majority of non-profits and charitable organizations in Ontario isn't tainted by the bad actions of a few.

One of the things that concerned me when I was reading that section is that when you are asking for an investigation and making a court application for an investigation into these kinds of activities in a charitable corporation, the hearings don't need to be held in public. I would really like to understand why that's the case and make sure that the public benefit—the right to know—is being served here and that we aren't having secret hearings that don't do anything to shine the light and make sure the integrity of these organizations is being maintained.

At the end of all this, I would just like to say that we look forward to getting this matter into committee. It seems like a good bill on the face of it, but there are these other issues that I think need to be addressed. I hope the government will allow sufficient time for all these issues to be fully examined and resolved.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Kormos: I listened carefully to the contribution by the member from Whitby-Oshawa, along with her colleague the member for York-Simcoe, and I'm particularly grateful to her for drawing our attention to the public benefit corporation. Of course, it is something that is worthy of some inquiry into what is intended here, what it's encompassing and what goals it purports or intends to achieve.

Of course, almost the corollary of that is the permission that a non-profit corporation that is contemplated by this act be allowed to carry on commercial activity. That's almost the flip side of the public benefit corporation, isn't it? It's an interesting pair of concepts. The committee will be the place to investigate this.

I'm going to have a chance to speak to this for an hour and 20 minutes—I guess only an hour; I'm sorry.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: It will seem like an hour.

Mr. Peter Kormos: For Ms. Dombrowsky it will seem like an hour, of course. It will seem like two hours, probably, if indeed she has pulled House duty. I can't, for the life of me, imagine why a senior minister would be pulling House duty except out of respect for her colleague the Minister of Consumer Affairs—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: —Consumer Services, who deserves to have her colleagues here watching, so she can show them how it's done.

I'm going to be talking a little bit about that ministry. Although there won't be any personal comments, I think I'll have occasion to talk a little bit about the minister, seeing as how I have an hour. If Charlie and Mary are watching, I want you to stay tuned because I may talk a little bit about you as well.

Mr. Prue will have the final questions and comments, and then I'll have the floor for a little while, and we'll see where this debate takes us this afternoon and perhaps into the evening.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I'm pleased to have a couple of minutes. I had the opportunity, if I can digress momentarily, to hear both the minister and the parliamentary assistant speak to the matter during the time I was here. I had to step out for a bit while the member opposite, the critic, the member from Whitby—Oshawa, was making her presentation. I came back in for part of it, near the end. I was with our CAS, so it was time also well spent.

I do want to start by following up on the member's statement today, the member from Oshawa, and also extend my congratulations to the member from Whitby—Oshawa—and in this case, I will say to her husband, the current federal Minister of Finance and former Minister of Finance here, in a former government. I'm so pleased to hear about the success of the Abilities Centre. I know that has been a passion of yours, of your husband's and of the community. I recall when I first arrived here, on this side of the House, and the critic for finance, a former minister, came across to this side of the floor looking for my support, as a new member on the government side, for the Abilities Centre. I was obviously pleased to be able to extend that hand of support in that regard as well. So, congratulations.

On the legislation itself, I heard the member opposite, in her comments. I'm obviously pleased to hear that she is speaking highly of the bill, the consultative process, the debate that's going on here and the desire to see it in committee and make a good bill better, to make it the best it can be. I know that would be the minister's desire as well as the parliamentary assistant's in their role during the process we're into, and they'll look forward to what happens here as well as elsewhere.

I had the opportunity, in my last 20 seconds, on Saturday night to be at the Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre fundraising ball, Quest for a New Home. That's an example of a non-profit organization that needs new legislation to be effective directors and to

manage the affairs of an organization of that nature in our community, the community where I live. I look forward to this legislation supporting those types of organizations and what they need.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: It's always a pleasure to listen to the member from Whitby—Oshawa speak, and particularly on this bill, which she's somewhat familiar with—a little more familiar perhaps than the rest of us, but we didn't have much time to prepare for this bill. We didn't have much time to caucus this bill, which I'm sure we'll do tomorrow. It's becoming a habit of this government to introduce bills and debate them prior to the opposition having time to caucus them and to get the various expertise involved in it over time. That always makes it difficult.

I think of the organizations in my riding that are going to be affected by this bill, hopefully affected by it in a good way. Certainly those who volunteer in non-profit organizations are deserving of any help that we can give them, as legislators in this province. They give of their time unselfishly, they improve the quality of life that we have in our ridings, and for them to have an easier time with the regulations would be a good thing.

In the same vein, we have to be very careful because there are those who would take advantage, of course, and that's something that we always have to prepare for and be aware of and make sure that the legislation doesn't assist those who would take advantage of a more benevolent regulatory regime. The problem with that is that that dual-edged sword quite often puts added pressure, and perhaps even added expenses, on to the volunteer organizations that will be affected by this. We certainly hope that this legislation won't do that. If the government takes its time, has committee hearings and hears from the people who are directly involved with it, this might be a better piece of legislation.

1520
The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise to commend both the member from York—Simcoe and the member from Whitby—Oshawa for the statements they made here today. I must admit that on perusing this bill, I found it as dry as dust. I was trying to read it and trying to find some of the oomph and some of the passion, or something that one would be able to speak—but in listening to the two members and in listening to what they had to say, they did come up with some very good ideas. I commend them, first of all, for recognizing that this will need to go to committee in order to be fleshed out and that all the parties be heard. I'm given to understand that the government will be allowing this to go forward to committee, so I think that that's a good thing that both of the members said.

The member from Whitby-Oshawa talked about committee members having the authority or being allowed to seek professional opinion and professional advice. I

would tell you that that is one thing that is sorely needed, particularly in non-profit institutions—people who give out of the goodness of their time, their soul, their volunteer capacity—to be able to get that kind of professional advice to render them blameless or harmless, in legal terms.

I also commend her for her input on the public benefit that she talked about, because—I think it was the public benefit corporation; I wrote it down. This was new to me, and I think that it is an avenue well worth exploring.

To the two members, thank you for bringing some clarity to this. I hope that as the days and weeks go by, it becomes more and more exciting to those of us who participate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Whitby-Oshawa has up to two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'd like to thank the members from Welland, Pickering—Scarborough East, Halton and Beaches—East York for their comments. I think that we're all looking forward to getting this matter into committee and to making it into the excellent bill that we're told that it can be.

I would like to say, just to the comment that was made by the member for Pickering-Scarborough East with respect to the actual sod-turning that we had last Friday for the Abilities Centre, it has been a long-time passion of mine—10 years in the making—and I'm so pleased, for all of our communities and for people with special needs, that we've finally got the matter under way.

I'm also very grateful that all four levels of government are supporting this project. The federal minister, Minister Diane Finley, was there, and the provincial minister, Minister Best, was there as well. I want to thank her very much for attending on Friday and for her very kind words with respect to the centre. Mr. Roger Anderson, who is the chair of Durham region, also attended, as well as Mayor Pat Perkins and a number of councillors, including the mayor of Pickering. It was a really great community event.

I know I'm not speaking exactly on the topic—I'm wandering off a bit—but I'll ask for your indulgence on this, because this is a project that is going to be a world-class sports, recreation and performing arts centre for people with special needs that is being built in Whitby, adjacent to our municipal sports complex, Iroquois Park. In addition to being a regional sports facility, we're hoping that it will be able to model the inclusion that we want to see in our communities for people with special needs.

In addition to doing regional training, we hope to be able to do some international training and have people come to the Abilities Centre from all parts of the world in order to learn inclusionary practices. I think this will put Whitby on the map, but more importantly, Ontario as a truly inclusive place to live. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Kormos: I am pleased to engage in this discussion, this debate, this discourse, on behalf of the

New Democratic Party here at Queen's Park. I will do my incompetent best to keep Mr. Prue engaged and, if I can, from time to time excite him about this particular bill—I just frowned, but you know exactly what I meant—or to the concepts embodied in it or to any other number of things that I may find myself speaking about in the course of the next hour.

First, I want to thank the staff from the Ministry of Consumer Services for accommodating me with a briefing this morning. It was a very brief meeting. The entourage that showed up was very impressive. There were five of them. There was just one of me, but there were five of them. I went, "One, two, three, four"—I was very impressed. They had their pens out—they were wonderful people. Obviously, the minister's political staff person was there. She performs multiple functions, but she's a delightful woman and I enjoyed having her there. She didn't bar any of my questions.

From time to time, you do one of these briefings and the political staffer will be there. I've done enough briefings and I think I have a reasonably good idea of what to ask the bureaucrats. First, usually as a windup, I say, "Is there anything that is going to be contentious about the bill?" Right away, especially a younger political staffer, will sort of drop the hand down and, sort of lawyer-like, "You won't answer that." It's at that point that you remind the political staffer that we can do this with or without that political staffer.

But Ms. Aggelonitis here—her Ministry of Consumer Services staff were outstanding. She should be very proud of them. They seemed to be quite pleased to have a bill on the table here. Well, think about it, Minister. It's been a long time. You take the ministry and, there you go, you've got a bill in first reading and then in second reading. That doesn't happen readily. It's pretty competitive in that cabinet room, isn't it? You've got cabinet ministers just climbing all over each other, trying to get their bills advanced.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Well, you do. You've got some pretty seasoned pros in there who are ready to kick you aside or walk right over you, if need be, to get their bill advanced. So here's a newly minted minister who was able to kick butt and obviously just say, "No, this bill is going to have priority. The Attorney General can go pound salt and, for that matter, so can the Minister of Community Safety. The finance minister can just wait his turn," along with half a dozen other cabinet heavy-weights, and the Minister of Consumer Services prevailed. I wouldn't expect anything less from a woman from Welland. I thought it was pretty slick from the minister.

Now, she's probably made some enemies in the course of doing that, and the kinds of enemies you make in the course of doing that, they're not likely to confront you to your face. I learned a long time ago that you walk slowly with your back to the wall and sort of walk sideways, crab-like. So you'll do fine. The occasional stab in the back—there are tailors out there who can do invisible

mending. It's remarkable what can be done from being stabbed in the back by your colleagues.

It's a competitive business, isn't it, Minister? It's not easy. It's not only demanding in terms of the time you have to commit, but as I say, there's politics within politics. There's the politics of partisan politics, political parties—New Democrats, Conservatives, Liberals—and then within the Liberal Party, there's politics, just like there is in the Conservative Party and the NDP. There's politics within cabinet and then there's the Premier's office politics. That's the part that's particularly annoying, because there you've got to duel with people who aren't even elected. You don't mind taking on somebody else who's won their seat in an election. Regardless of the political stripe they happen to be, they got elected fairly and squarely by their constituents. But to have some—what did Bill Murdoch call them?

Interjection: We can't say here.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Pimply-faced—

Mr. Peter Kormos: Yes? Interjection: Nancies.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Yes, sir. Okay, we've got that now. You see, that's how you get on Hansard: by being acknowledged. If I didn't want you on Hansard, I just would have ignored you. So you said it for me. That's a Murdochism that I think will be in the books.

So I say to the minister, I'm pleased to be able to debate this legislation. I suspect, unless Paul Miller really, really wants to, I'll be working with the committee as this bill winds its way through committee.

Anyway, I want to make it clear: The New Democrats have every intention of supporting this bill on principle on second reading. There's certainly no reason not to. Our goal is to get it into committee. That's where the hard work is going to be done, and the experts, if you will—which is just everyone from engineers and lawyers to really the real experts, just plain folks out there—are going to have a chance to comment on it. I'm confident, as is my colleague from Whitby—Oshawa, Ms. Elliott, that the minister, and more importantly the government—because if you thought it was a struggle to get this bill past your cabinet colleagues, the firewall in the Premier's office is even more formidable, isn't it? Getting to those guys is really, really difficult, and they can make you or break you.

1530

But once again, I'm just telling the minions in the Premier's office: Don't even think of taking on the Minister of Consumer Services, because she's tougher than all of you combined.

So I thanked your staff. I say that in all sincerity, because it was a delightful briefing and I appreciate the speed with which we did it.

As you have heard, some people have noted that it's a little bit difficult to see bills introduced and then called for second reading within 24 to 48 hours, because not only does the member who's the critic, for instance, want to be briefed on it, but then our research staff want to get briefed on it. And we really do like to have this as a

subject matter at caucus meetings. But this bill was introduced last Wednesday or Thursday. Caucus meetings, as everybody knows, are on Tuesday, and that means we don't have another caucus meeting until tomorrow. So here I am already making policy, and I could have generated some strife in my own caucus by just coming forward and saying that we are going to support the bill in principle on second reading. Who knows what kind of grief I'll get in caucus tomorrow from my caucus mates or from my leader? Those things happen. I'm not freelancing. I'm not going rogue. I'm just doing the best I can under the circumstances that have been imposed on us.

That's why it's important to get a briefing promptly, as the ministerial staff were prepared to do today. I'm confident that if I need them again, they'll be there again. All five don't have to come. Maybe they just wanted to get out of the ministry for a while. It's like the pages here. Sometimes, like on this Monday afternoon, things sort of slow down, evaporate, dry up in here. Like Mr. Prue said, he found this bill, upon first reading, as exciting as dust.

Mr. Michael Prue: Dry as dust.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Dry as dust, yes. I won't mix up my similes.

The one thing I am going to talk about—and I made reference to this in one of the little two-minute opportunities that I had—I appreciate that the government is trying to roll this out and package it up to make it part of a broader overall theme.

I know you just got back from, as some people would say, that upscale weekend in Collingwood. I don't know why people are offended—somebody referred to Collingwood as being upscale and even a little pricey. It's a very attractive part of the province. You expect to pay for quality. It's not skid row by any stretch of the imagination. Well, it isn't. So can you understand why some of your colleagues got their knickers in a knot about somebody pointing out that Collingwood was upscale? That was the impression I got. Of course Collingwood is upscale. It's ski people and chalet people. I've been to Collingwood. I don't get there a lot, and they're probably just as pleased about that as anybody else. But I don't know why he got all upset and twisted about that.

Of course, I was back in Welland on the weekend. I had to come back here on Sunday. I had to get a point of privilege prepared, and I think we did okay with that. We managed to make it seem reasonably presentable. It got the right people upset, I suppose. If there is a test of a point of order or point of privilege, it's whether or not you get the right people upset. If nobody is bothered by it, you probably haven't done a very good job at all. Similarly, if legislation is as dry as dust, it's the minister's job to spruce it up a little bit and make it sexy so that people talk about it—and I suspect people will.

As a matter of fact, one of the things I was at on the weekend was down in Wainfleet, on Rathfon Road, a beautiful bit of acreage, at a project called Jericho House, that had its origins in Newfoundland. It's been somewhat

peripatetic, if you will. It wound its way from Newfoundland to up near Orangeville, finally down to Welland. It's a Catholic-based but multi-faith ministry, and its focus is on young people. Its focus is on developing leadership in general, on social and ecological justice, and of course, on the spirituality component.

There were people there from all sorts of faiths. A Brethren in Christ preacher was there. I know him because Malcolm Allen and I were at his church on a Sunday morning several months ago. It was nice to see him again. There are a lot of Brethren in Christ down there, as you know. They're a historical congregation that shares roots with the Mennonite people. They're peaceloving people, social justice-bent people; good folks.

So there we were at Jericho House. I suspect they're the very sort of corporation that this bill contemplates. They had already poured the concrete pad for a \$1.85million centre for—I think it was going to be 40 ensuite rooms. Again, it's designed for training programs for young people. I felt really good about it. I had the opportunity to speak to them and I said that the story they're telling about young people is about young people who have strong, inherent talent, skill and smarts. They're telling a story about young people who are clever; young people who have passion for things like social justice and ecological justice; young people who are interested in their spirituality and developing or expanding their spirituality; young people who have leadership skills. That's not the story you hear about young people when you watch the evening news or read the Toronto Sun or watch any number of those evening soap operas on television and some of the incredible pop culture stuff, which doesn't tell a very good story about young people.

I suppose that one of the things that always impresses me about the pages here at Queen's Park—and I thought of the pages when I was speaking to that group—is that these are the sort of young people whom that group is talking about working with: young people who are bright and talented—say no if it's not the case, but I think you are—with a passion, a thirst for knowledge, a hunger to learn things; people who are well-rounded; people who think about others more than they think about themselves. I thought about the pages, young people who are destined for leadership positions in their own right.

I closed at the Jericho House groundbreaking—it was a faux groundbreaking, if you will, because the concrete pad had been poured. They left a little patch that was just gravel so they could do the groundbreaking. I commented on the fact that young people need that sort of training, because Lord knows their parents and grandparents have left behind some awful messes when it comes to ecological and social matters and social justice.

I knew this was coming up this afternoon in terms of second reading debate, so I started reflecting on the bill in seriousness while I was at Jericho House. I was there with Malcolm Allen. He's our new member of Parliament in Welland, another New Democrat. We're very proud of Malcolm. Malcolm has been working his behind

off. He has been working like the devil, in the riding and in Ottawa. He's the junior agriculture critic. He just got back from the east coast, visiting farmers in the various eastern provinces and talking to farmers as part of the federal agricultural committee; trying to get in touch and see the sort of things that especially young farmers, which is—well, we have to. The old farmers are precisely that: old farmers. They know it. They're tired. They don't want to farm anymore. It's young people who we want to get interested in farming.

As I say, we were up in St. Catharines at the folk arts festival, with Jim Bradley, for the kick-off. Then we were at the great Latino celebration—which is a really fascinating, wonderful, vibrant, exciting community. We're

really lucky to have them in Niagara.

Niagara has always been communities of immigrants. The minister's family and my family are examples of that. But now we've got these ongoing waves of immigration, and the character of the new Canadian there has changed dramatically. It's not people from eastern Europe or southern Europe, like my family or the minister's family; it's people from Asia and Central America and South America and Africa, literally the whole world. As I say, I was so excited to be with the Latino group.

Then we visited, before I had other things I had to do, the Slovak community up at Holy Rosary church in Thorold. The Vychodna dancers were there. They're based in Mississauga. It's a long-time dance troupe. They're always very popular, because they're a very robust dance group—young people. As a matter of fact, they had a young Slovak choreographer who spent six months, I think she told me, here in Canada with them. It's always exciting for these groups to get—because again, those are the sorts of groups that would have occasion to use these sorts of non-equity corporations.

1540

As I said, I was going to object to the effort—and look, I know that the minister didn't write all of that. She wrote the biggest chunk of her comments, but she had imposed on her the spin about this bill being part of the poverty reduction strategy. I know her, and she wouldn't have said that if it were up to her. I know the parliamentary assistant, and he used similar language. Look, to be fair, in the total scheme of things—let's not mince words here; there's no reason to be shy, no reason to be fearful—an area of disaster for this government has been the poverty file, the bizarre commentary that, "We're in a recession now, so now is the wrong time to address poverty." Lord love a duck. What better time? That's when more and more people are poor. Yet the government has not been very successful at all. It has been totally unsuccessful. It's been a disaster when it comes to addressing poverty—and a whole lot of other things, but I'll limit it to that because I don't want to stray from the topic at hand.

This I thought was interesting, because the effort, the attempt to paint this as part of a poverty reduction strategy, reminded me of the proverb, "Una hirundo non

facit ver." I'll get back to that before the hour is over, I'm sure. My pronunciation may not be the best, but people who do the Latin-English pronunciation will understand exactly what I mean. The pages do. They know what I'm talking about. They're bright, clever young people.

By the way, I'm sure that down at the Fireside on Southworth Street—I suspect that the minister made sure that her parents knew that she, as minister, was presenting her first bill today to kick off second reading. I can't be certain, but I know the family well enough. Let me put it this way: They'd be very upset if she hadn't. They'd be ordering DVDs and videotapes from the legislative broadcast service. They'd be watching. The minister would be in trouble at home. I'd have to drop by and make peace, I suppose, and explain that she's so busy that she just never—but she didn't forget her parents.

As a matter of fact, I was talking to her mother just the other day, because Charlie was celebrating his birthday. He was 71, and Mary is going to be 66 today, tomorrow, some time—

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: You're not supposed to

tell people's age.

Mr. Peter Kormos: No, no. These people are—look, I've known them for so long that they can't be younger than that. Why shouldn't everybody know? What's wrong with being healthy and hard-working after having raised children and supported family and friends and, at the ages of 71 and 66, still be working hard and having passion and energy and getting up every morning and still being excited? You're darn right, Mary's turning 66 and Charlie turned 71. You know what? They should be proud of their age and proud of the fact that they're still vibrant, exciting people and, again, tough as nails. They are.

The restaurant business—and the minister was just a little kid; she doesn't remember. Breakfast is a big meal there, so you've got to be up at—who knows?—4 o'clock. I could speak with some of the other male members here. At 4 o'clock we're up and awake and out of bed, but then as soon as we do what we've got to do, we're back in for another hour, hour and a half. But when Mary and Charlie were up at 4 in the morning to get things going for the restaurant, it wasn't a matter of just relieving yourself and going back to bed. It was a matter of getting downstairs, into the kitchen and starting the hard, hard work.

Sunday mornings at the Fireside are always a delight. It's sort of like Sunday brunch. It's not the King Edward Hotel, it's not the Four Seasons. It's the Fireside, and everybody is there. Steve Latinovich was a big patron there. Steve's a former hockey player and a very capable, very competent, as a matter of fact, corporate lawyer. Steve Latinovich would know about this sort of stuff, hands down. I used to be there when I was still practising law. Marc Girard, my dear friend the judge, would be there. Occasionally—nobody ever served a Caesar before 11 o'clock, but occasionally—nobody ever served a Caesar before 11 o'clock. I'll leave it at that. It simply never would happen anywhere, least of all at the Fireside. What a neat restaurant it is.

They're out of style. First of all, nobody wants to and the damned McDonald's and Burger Kings, those horrible food poisoning stations. Well, it's true. They kill people. Talk to your colleague Ms. Best. She'll be the first to tell you. You don't eat that stuff, do you? It'll kill you. First it makes you fat and then it kills you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): However entertaining, I would just ask the member from Welland to occasionally come back to the subject of the bill put forward by the Minister of Consumer Services.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Speaker, I appreciate your guidance and direction. I really do. I value it. I want you to know that you should feel free any time you choose—if you feel that I'm straying off path, just turn me around and set me right back to where I ought to be going.

But I also want to tell you this, Speaker: It's like travelling to Welland from Toronto. There are two ways to get there. You can take the QEW, which is boring and nerve-racking, but you get there faster than any other way, although some days it's not very fast at all. Or you could take Highway 8 and Highway 20. That's the scenic route. It may take you a little longer to get there, but it's a heck of a lot more interesting. You learn more, you see more, you enjoy the ride more, but it just takes a little bit longer. So bear with me, Speaker. Let's take the scenic route to where I'm going, because I promise you we'll get there. I promise you.

The minister's staff, the briefing—I'm grateful. Mary and Charlie, who are wonderful people, delightful people, I wish both of them happy birthdays and many, many more to come. Their daughter doesn't see them often enough, but they can raise that with her. I'm on record as having admonished her for not taking better care of her parents, because, Lord knows, they took care

of her when she needed them.

We did Jericho House on the weekend, a non-profit organization.

Let's take a look at the bill. I'm not getting on the QEW yet, but I'm getting to Welland. One of the interesting things—not here. This is a rewrite and it hasn't really been that long and the old bill isn't really that bad. It's just old. And when was old ever bad? That's for probably the youngest minister in the cabinet to make that sort of observation. It's probably easy, but increasingly I resent that—I do. I was probably guilty of casting those stones in my own day, but I'm a little older than I was a day ago. For Pete's sake, it doesn't mean I have to be repealed. I'm looking forward to carrying on.

One of the things that was interesting—we encountered this with Bill 158 and the foreign-trained accountants. The incredible resistance to recognizing that Canada is a far different place than it was during the prime ministership of Louis St. Laurent, which was some time around 1954—1948 to 1954, sometime in the post-war years, in the 1950s, when I was a kid. One of the things that I found remarkable, and I'm wondering if the minister wants to take note of it, is in section 11, "Prohibitions," where it says, "A corporation may not have a name"fair enough. There's the usual stuff about a name that's some other name. You have to do these searches before you register your corporation, and the ministry has to be satisfied that you aren't stealing somebody else's name.

You interrupted me when I was condemning the fast food industry, right? Yes, McDonald's and Burger King poison people. They make you fat, and then they kill you. That's why I love places like the Fireside that make real food—not pre-packaged, not synthetic, no chemicals, just lots of love and hard work. People should be eating at the Fireside, not at McDonald's, end of story. You want a burger? Go to the Fireside. They'll make you a burger that'll knock you flat on your behind. They will.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: In a good way.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Yes, in a good way. You'll be astounded. Or the souvlaki. Go for the souvlaki, and tzatziki sauce, of course—and garlic. But that's okay; garlic's good. We know that.

But take a look, if you will, at section 11 of your bill. You have the usual prohibitions on using names that are deemed for a corporation. But then in subsection (2) again, granted that it says, "Subject to the regulations, a corporation may have a name that is,

"(a) English only;

"(b) French only;

"(c) one name that is a combination of English and French: or

"(d) one name in English and one name in French that are equivalent but are used separately."

I listened carefully when the minister said that this was an updating of the act, but I thought, "Hmm. English and French I get, but what about my Croatian friends in Welland who have their Croatian National Home, the dom hrvatski? Why should they be prohibited from naming their non-profit corporate entity in their language?"

You go down further and "only letters from the Roman alphabet" can be used—fair enough. Although, to be fair, if I was an Arabic group-because there is an Arabic centre along the QEW as you get close to the Gardiner. There are big signs out there, and they're in Arabic script. I hope that's the correct way of describing it. I can't read it, but they obviously say, "That's fine. We don't care if you read it or not; it's for our community,

for our people."

We do have the requirement that the name be written in the Roman alphabet—fair enough—so you're not going to use Cyrillic. Then again, some of my family people use the Cyrillic alphabet, the eastern ones, and that's okay, but why not let people use a language that may be, in the case of an ethnic group or an ethnic community or an ethnic social club or, heck, a mutual benefit society, a settlement community, a community that assists newcomers—why not let them use Spanish or Hungarian or Sudanese or whatever language they wish? Why not let them use that language to name the legal name? Because the argument will be, "Well, they can use any name they want when they're carrying on business, but then they have to put"—as I understand the law, and

we'll check this out in committee—"somewhere the name of the corporation for legal purposes," so you know who it is.

That seemed to me like it might make sense, but I'm eager to hear-if I'm wrong, say so. Okay, so I'm not wrong. I appreciate that. There may be others who will say so down the road, and fair enough, but I just wondered if that was something that would, again, embrace new Canadians. And not just embrace new Canadians, because there's nothing new Canadian about using a language other than English or French. It could be very old Canadian, because the reality is that while we're a bilingual country, we are also at the same time a multilingual country. You can't deny it. It's the reality of it. You go down the Danforth, and you don't just hear people speaking Greek; you hear every other language under the sun, too. And I particularly enjoy the Danforth. because with my last name being what it is, tavern owners will say, "Oh, Mr. Kormos, are you Greek?" And I say, "In my heart." I don't lie. An ouzo here and there, a retsina here and there—who am I to say no?

Mr. Michael Prue: Don't forget the Metaxa.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Oh, the Metaxa. You're getting into the brandy and stuff. No, no—maybe late at night, but we're talking early in the evening. That lays you low too quickly. You're home too soon after you get into Metaxa—although I suppose, if push came to shove, what am I going to do once it's poured, other than say thank you?

You go down to Niagara. We have the folk arts festival in St. Catharines, primarily in Jim Bradley's riding, except the riding of Welland is also the southern and western part of St. Catharines, so we share the riding. Unfortunately, the MPP for St. Catharines, Minister Bradley, and I can't be there during the course of the week, which is just as well because I've just lost a whole whack of weight that I don't want to put on, and Mr. Bradley—I don't know. I'd suspect he hasn't lost a whole lot of weight, and Lord knows he doesn't need more. But we always have this dilemma around the folk arts festival. We look at each other and we figure, you know—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I would have to ask that you don't speak about members who are not present, particularly their weight.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Listen, I suppose when I was 20 pounds fatter, I could do it. Maybe you're right. I'm not skinny, by any stretch of the imagination, and I'm struggling to keep the weight off; you've got to understand that, Speaker. So my apologies. I was the last person who was going to mention that he wasn't here, because that's not particularly parliamentary either, is it? But it's part of this—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound has been to a few folk arts festival dinners himself.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: Yes.

Mr. Peter Kormos: "Yes," he says.

You go to that folks arts community. Then we've got the Welland Folklore Festival, at the multicultural centre and heritage council, coming up in the course of July and August—again, another whole run of these things.

What I'm saying is that many of these communities aspire to having little social clubs or ethnic clubs or halls, however modest. Many of them aspire to doing work with their own community or other communities, helping not just new immigrants but families that are in crisis. They're the sort of groups and communities that are going to be using this new legislation, aren't they? They're going to have no choice, once the bill becomes law.

All I'm saying—this most modest of proposals—is why not consider letting these people use their mother tongue to create the words to identify their corporate name? Surely we're big enough to understand that we are not just a bilingual country; we're a multilingual country. Although we're a country with what we call two founding cultures—ignoring the native aboriginal community in the course of doing that—we are a multicultural country.

I was just reading the book Public Integrity, which is most appropriate, as you can imagine, working here as I do. There's a beautiful illustration of the American approach as compared to the Canadian approach to multiculturalism. The American approach is one that's far more so—at least the mainstream of it is—of uniculturalism. I'll get it into the chamber at some point. So that was something that came to mind.

I am going to talk about the corporate liability, the director's liability, but I do want to—because from time to time, I have members of the chamber suggest, "Why can't these bills just pass? What's this business of debate?" This bill isn't going to be debated at length. The work is going to be done in committee, because in principle we support the bill. If we don't support the bill in principle, then there's even lengthier debate. There's a whole lot of stuff written about these sorts of things.

I had occasion just the other day to be reading Procedure in the Canadian House of Commons, by W.F. Dawson. It's a book I picked up used because it's not in print anymore. It originally was at the Tallahassee junior college—that'd be where? Tallahassee, Florida?

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Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Yeah. So this wonderful book, this wonderful text—it really is an important book, in terms of Canadian parliamentary procedure—is out of print, and made its route long distance. See, it's just like I told you about going to Welland: This book came back to Toronto and did the long distance route. It went all the way to Tallahassee, Florida, and then back here.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Tallahassee junior college.

In any event, I'm just taking a look, because you see, the Parliament is not about government. The Parliament is about checks and balances on government, and if you're in the government caucus, you learn that quicker than anybody does, especially if you're in cabinet. The government is, well, the Premier's office, and just as a government caucus is a check and balance on the Premier and the Premier's office, the Parliament is a check and balance on the government, or it should be at least. It's a special role, an important role, that the opposition has.

I get people calling—my neighbour just the other night, Wighty, Rob Wightman, who works over at Lakeside Steel; he's been there a long, long time. He and his wife are dear friends of mine. He was watching question period, the hour and 15 minutes, last Thursday morning, and he was complaining to me about the nature of the speeches. He said, "Why can't the opposition just support the government once in a while?" I want to give him Paul Miller's phone number and let him speak to the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek about that proposition. As far as the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek is concerned, he has supported the government far too often, to the point where he can't do it. But the opposition plays a very important role.

So here's Dawson, right off the bat: "Above all, parliamentary practice, which grew up without written rules, was designed to encourage opposition to the executive." This whole process here is designed to encourage opposition, and that's right at the get-go, right at page 3.

"The mere shortening of the session may appear attractive to members who feel now that they are underpaid and are given insufficient time to maintain a business in their home constituencies. This feeling is, obviously, not a sufficient justification for altering the procedure of the House, although it may be a convincing argument for increasing the pay of members. The only really acceptable version of this argument is the one which contends that the session should be shortened now, so that in future, when the House has more work to do, the session can be again extended."

This is the important part: "A desire for efficiency is, on the surface, commendable. But again, we must be careful that in a blind search for efficiency we do not lose the essence of the parliamentary system. Clearly, a rigidly controlled Parliament and a muzzled opposition would, in one sense, from the most efficient Legislature possible to devise. But the important fact is that Parliament, by its encouragement of an opposition, is deliberately using means which are apparently inefficient in order to achieve efficiency in its ultimate aims. We encourage slow procedures, such as three readings of bills, because we feel that better legislation results if full publicity is given to the activities of the government. No matter how efficient we wish to make Parliament, we must not lose sight of these democratic necessities."

I thought that was a pretty interesting observation, and it's a consistent theme in many of the texts and writings about parliamentary democracy and procedure in Westminster and other Commonwealth Parliaments.

So what we do here is important. Yes, it is the job of the opposition to have the contra voice. Otherwise, as Dawson points out in his book, just muzzle the opposition, send everybody home, and then you don't have democracy at all, do you? But very high levels of efficiency. If I recall, those trains will run on time, won't they? But that kind of efficiency is at the expense of democracy and at the expense of good government, because good government is as much a function of a strong and effective opposition as it is of anything else.

Think about some of the poorest governments we've had, and you almost inevitably can discover oppositions that are understaffed, under-resourced, undersized or simply tired and—well, they've thrown in the towel, demoralized. Perhaps they've suffered one too many time allocation motions, one too many guillotine motions, one too many closure motions.

It seems to me that the important thing for this bill now is to get it out into committee.

I do note, because the government has insisted that I be told, on their website—they don't have to pound the drum on this bill. The baby doesn't have to be spanked before it breathes its first breath. This bill is going to do fine all on its own. You don't have to embellish it with fluffy stuff, or you don't have to embellish it by making it appear to be something that it's not. I'm going to get to—nuts, we're running out of time, Speaker. I was hoping you'd let me know when we were running short, but I suppose, just as I wasn't looking at the clock, you may not have been looking at the clock, either. I understand.

I will get to the liability of directors, which is a big issue out there. Why don't we just get to it right now no, I don't want to get to it yet. I still want to talk about, again, embellishing this bill with stuff like saying it'soh, please. Everybody was doing fine until they started talking about how this bill is part of a poverty reduction strategy. It's not. Then the argument is, "Oh, well, we rely so much on volunteerism," because the public sector is abandoning filling-because now, you see, there's an effort to confuse the public sector with volunteerism. Well, they're both public sector, huh? I suppose they are in that they're not private, except that the volunteer world is full of private entities, isn't it, Mr. Prue? The Red Cross: Organizations like that are fundamentally private organizations. They're not private the same way that evil McDonald's is; they're not private the same way that poisonous Burger King company is; they're not private the same way that those deadly Slurpee manufacturers are-

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Deadly Slurpees. Kids walk out of there—not just kids, adults. I go to the corner store, and they've got their arms wrapped around a great big Slurpee. It's like a 10-pound bag of potatoes. All it does is make you fat, and then it kills you. You die a slow death, so the public purse is taxed again because OHIP is stressed, and Slurpee incorporated makes huge amounts of money. They're as bad as the heroin dealer or the meth dealer or the crack cocaine dealer. I suppose Slurpees are almost the crack cocaine of the suburbs, aren't they?

Look, I find our increased reliance upon the public sector very disturbing—very disturbing. I expect to pay

taxes based on how much money I make, based upon my family size and deductibles. I don't have any deductions, so I expect to pay taxes. I, quite frankly, don't hope that we as a community, we as a province, we as a society relinquish our collective responsibility to each other in favour of, "Oh, we'll let churches and volunteer organizations take care of them. People can give as they wish," so it's up to you to decide how much you're going to give. So if you're having a generous day, maybe you'll give a little more. If you're having a grumpy day—maybe the Speaker is grumpy today and the Speaker, being grumpy today, is less inclined. Maybe the Speaker had a bad week. Maybe the Speaker had to replace some windows in her house and the Speaker, or any other member, just simply doesn't have the cash.

I like the idea of paying taxes and paying taxes based on my income—in other words, the ability to pay—so that we provide health care, so that we provide public security, policing and health-based security, so that we provide skating rinks and swimming pools for young people and old folks. I like paying those taxes—well, that's not true. Nobody likes paying taxes, but you don't like paying for the gas in your car either, do you? But that's the kind of world that I think my grandparents envisioned as they were struggling through the 1930s and as they made sacrifices, and certainly my parents in that post-war era. Nobody likes paying taxes or paying for gas for their car. But the idea of paying on the basis of what your income is—in other words, paying your fair share; rich people paying more than poor people. We can't expect poor people to sustain our public services because they're poor. They don't have any money.

The McGuinty government, with its tax gifts to the banks and big corporations and the elimination of the capital tax—Mr. Prue, am I right on that one? Some of the most wealthy institutions in our society get huge tax breaks, when their presence here has nothing do with how much tax they pay or don't pay. The CIBC, the Bank of Nova Scotia, that whole gang of them, are going to be here picking your pockets anyway, nickel-and-diming you at the ATM machine, ripping off your bank accounts left and right, then trying to sell you life insurance, car insurance and who knows what else down the road.

I appreciate volunteer work; I appreciate good works, good acts. I appreciate selfless activity. I appreciate the generosity of spirit that we, in general, have in Canada. As a matter of fact, it has been noted by more than a few that the existence of volunteer agencies is always a hall-mark of a freer society. Totalitarian countries do not have volunteer organizations because, of course, totalitarian countries are frightened or intimidated by counter-structures that could pose a risk to their identity.

So I appreciate volunteers. Obviously, all of us, on a daily basis, are in touch with the volunteer sector in our communities.

I really find objectionable the proposition that somehow we, as a community and a government, can abandon our role and obligation to redistribute wealth and to ensure that the sick are healed, to ensure that the aged—our parents and grandparents—are taken care of, and to ensure that people are housed.

This morning I read a delightful Joe Fiorito column in the Toronto Star. I'm a fan of Joe Fiorito. I saw him the other day. I was at a radio show with him. He tore out a new one for some young, bohemian-type artist who wrote a book of caricatures of street people with very uncomplimentary captions. Fiorito, the columnist, just went up one side and down the other side of him and pointed out the response in the audience to his little book of caricatures—he called it "art." What he did was take street people here in Toronto, many of them suffering from mental illness, and did caricatures in his book, then ascribed some of the worst in stereotypic qualities to them, calling one woman a crack whore and calling another one a drug dealer. These were real people, and they knew who they were when they were shown this. This young artist, so artsy, thought he was so clever and his latte-drinking friends could just giggle and chuckle about this. I'm so proud—read Joe Fiorito's column today. All right, good for you, Fiorito. He's a down-toearth kind of guy who has a very strong social justice

So there we are. I don't want to suggest that New Democrats are supporting this bill because we think there should be an even greater volunteer public sector. I don't want to diminish it, but I envision the kind of Ontario where the prosperity is spread around fairly enough that we have less and less need of volunteer organizations, and that if there are volunteer organizations, they are truly in addition to the basic needs; in other words, we don't rely upon them for the delivery of core social services. I think that's a very dangerous thing. It's a step backward.

As I say, I grew up in the 1950s. I was blessed to be able to watch my grandparents and parents struggle through their lifetimes, and I watched them work too hard, struggle too much, labour too long and sacrifice far too much to create a fairer Canada and a fairer Ontario, and build things like health care and OHIP and public education. They were in the Hall-Dennis era, with the growth of community colleges. That was the democratization of post-secondary education, wasn't it?

Heck, in my lifetime it was the democratization of secondary schools. We had two-year courses in secondary school. Young people had to buy books in so-called public secondary school. Kids who were going to Catholic schools had to pay tuition. That was a real battle that was fought and won. I remember that the New Democrats who were here fought hard to finally get full funding, because they thought it was wrong that any kid or her family should pay for her to go to public high school. We were witnesses to that.

I did want to get to section 43. This has been a matter of concern by a whole lot of folks—they call our constituency offices pretty regularly—and it's the whole issue of directors' liability. In other words, how does a

director protect himself from being sued; how does a director protect himself or herself from violating the law?

To be fair, this legislation codifies the standard of behaviour in subsection 43(1):

"Every director and officer in exercising his or her powers and discharging his or her duties to the corporation shall.

"(a) act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the corporation; and

"(b) exercise the care, diligence and skill that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in comparable circumstances."

Talk about a lost opportunity. You tell me what that means. I can get you half a dozen lawyers to write you half a dozen different letters of opinion about what that means. That's legal jargon. Folks from the OBA: Don't call me threatening to expel me. I'm not a member of the OBA, so you can't expel me.

It's legal jargon that's subject to legal interpretation. And so be it. This is a legal document; it's legislation. But for the life of me, I don't know why—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Don't engage him. Ignore him, for Pete's sake.

Mr. John O'Toole: Ignore him.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Ignore him. He's simply trying to bait you.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Ignore O'Toole, and if he starts gesturing with his hands, duck.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: His one-finger wave made him famous.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Member from Durham.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Again, I insist that he was only noting that I was still number one in his books.

We've got the importation of some legalese here. All I'm saying is that I'm not sure that section—I know what the lawyers intended; I know what the drafters, legislative counsel, intended. I think I do, but I'm not sure that's of much comfort to the amateur board member, and I don't say that disparagingly. Who's on these boards down in small-town Ontario, the real Ontario, places like Wainfleet, Port Colborne, Welland, Thorold and south St. Catharines, like where I come from? Who's on these boards? It's not lawyers—some are—but just plain folks. Sometimes it's church people. Sometimes it's people from the immigrant community. Sometimes they've got college and university degrees; sometimes they don't. Sometimes their literacy skills are very good; sometimes they ain't—I said.

So, where's the plain language here? Again, I know the ministry has been struggling for years—decades—around plain language. There are some international standards now, but nobody has managed to get it together here in the province. Where's the plain language so that somebody in good faith down where I come from can

read that section and say, "I understand what that means"?

There is the provision in section 44, the reasonable-diligence defence. In my view, the part that's going to be emphasized most is that if a member of a board of directors bases their conduct relying in good faith on "a report of a lawyer, accountant, engineer, appraiser or other person whose profession lends credibility to a statement made by them," then they've done due diligence.

One of the things I asked the good staff who came to give me the briefing this morning—we only used up 20 minutes of their time; it was over relatively quickly. I had read most of the bill and had a reasonably good handle on it; I just wanted to find out if there was anything I should be aware of that maybe I had missed.

As a member of the law society—it's the monopoly on lawyers here in the province of Ontario—I can call their assistance line any time I'm faced with what I consider to be an ethical dilemma, a practitioner's dilemma, and I can get advice. It doesn't cost me anything, and prudent lawyers will make an email or some sort of record of that advice—I don't know if they give you a number, literally—so that down the road, if somebody challenges your ethics, you can say, "No, I talked to the law society."

I suggested this to the ministry staff this morning. It's by and large well-meaning people who use their scarce free time to serve on the boards of most—not all, but most—of the organizations that we're talking about. I know that the ministry is going to have brochures and pamphlets, and again, Arlo Guthrie's eight-by-10 glossy photos with circles and arrows on each one. I understand that. What would be wrong with, literally, a help desk so that members of boards of directors wouldn't have to get the report of a lawyer, accountant, engineer or appraiser?

I know that primarily, that's going to be for when that lawyer, accountant, engineer or appraiser is retained by the corporation as a whole, but these little volunteer groups have no money. They don't have money, and the money they do get, they give away. If they didn't give it away, there'd be something wrong with them. Again, there are lawyers who provide pro bono services, and in some places there aren't. I don't begrudge lawyers making money, but for Pete's sake, make your income off of people who can afford it.

What would be wrong with the ministry, if it's really going to service this community—because the community is large, I agree with that. It's the "gotcha" game: governments do it all the time when it comes to grants. They've got these lengthy application forms and qualifications, unless it's that round of grant-giving that Mike Colle supervised; remember that one? No application forms, no paper trail. It was sort of, wink wink, nudge nudge, and "Here's the cash," but that was the exception, fortunately, and not the rule.

How many times have we had contacts in our constituency offices from these transfer payment agencies, people who apply for grants, and all of a sudden they're being told, "Oh, that's it; you didn't fill in this box." I don't know about you. I get a lot of those, and as I say, I call it the "gotcha" game because it's as if all of the high-priced help in the various bureaucracies sit back and just wait for one of these volunteer groups to muck up, and then they say, "Gotcha."

Why aren't we helping these groups do these things in the first place? It seems to me that a central law society handles it with a very small staff in terms of being a practitioners' resource. If the law society can do it for lawyers, surely the ministry can do it for volunteer boards and these sorts of things.

Again, you've got to have multilingualism. Not everybody is going to speak English. Not everybody is going to speak French. You can do all of the written material in the world, but there's always going to be that one extra question that isn't in the material. If people are going to be serving on these boards, one, they deserve to serve there with a level of comfort that they're not going to get themselves into a mess; and two, they want to be able to know that they can access something like this to get the best possible advice, best practices, if you will, to know that they're fulfilling their commitment, a moral one if not a legal one, to their corporate body and to the enterprise that that body's engaged in. Those are just a couple of modest proposals.

The reference una hirundo non facit ver, with respect to this being part of a poverty reduction plan—in English, it's "One swallow does not make a summer."

I thank you for your patience with me, Speaker. I appreciate Mary and Charlie for all their good stuff that they continue to do down in Welland, and I look forward to this going to committee.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I always try to listen as carefully as possible to the member from Welland because he is a lawyer. I think he practised before he came here, and he's still practising while he's here—in this place, I mean. He does often bring a lot of what I call technical content to the debate here, especially on challenging the standing orders and the lack of compliance, often, by the government in following those orders.

With respect, the important part he has the right to speak about and the knowledge is the liability for these volunteer boards. I would be supportive of taking any ambiguity out of whether or not they're liable. But even in the bill itself—I'm not qualified at this point because I've not been briefed on this. But if I'm looking at page 27 here, under part IV of the bill, under the "Officers" section, and it's subsection 42(2) right down to subsection 43(1):

"43.(1) Every director and officer in exercising his or her powers and discharging his or her duties to the corporation shall

"(a) act honestly and in good faith....

"(b) exercise the care, diligence and skill," and it goes on.

If you look at part III, it says here—if I can just find it. It gets a bit technical here reading all this stuff in the very limited time I'm given here. In part III it says:

"Capacity and Powers

"Corporations are given the capacity, rights, powers and privileges of a natural person, subject to any limitation in the act or in the corporation's articles. The act expressly provides that a corporation's actions are valid even if the corporation acted contrary to the act or its articles."

It's almost like a contradiction here. If you knowingly act in contradiction to the act, you should be liable, or at least subject to liability and be exposed. If someone did it deliberately or maliciously, I believe they shouldn't be covered by a non-clause, where they would be themselves liable for actions, when, in fact, they may have encumbered the board. I'd like you, in your response, your wrap-up, as a lawyer, to say that there's a contradiction between parts III and IV.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: I commend my friend from Welland because he made something that was as dry as dust humorous in many places. You don't have to believe me—

Mr. John O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I'm wondering if a quorum is present.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Durham has asked for a quorum count.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): A quorum is present.

The member for Beaches-East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: I said before that this bill was as dry as dust, but I want to commend my friend from Welland for putting some life into it, some humour, some anecdotal evidence, giving us a little tour of his constituency in Welland and the environs and talking in very nice terms about Charlie and Mary. Although I had met them once—I believe once—I didn't remember their names or the stories and the warmth of the Fireside, so I thank him for that.

He did bring up a couple of really good points, though, that I think we need to look at. Two in that one hour were the strongest and the most poignant to me and, I hope, to the minister.

First was the whole issue of names and whether or not they have to be in English or French. I certainly know that in my own constituency, the first language, of course, is English, but the second one is not French. In my own constituency, the second language is Chinese. I know that in many of the stores, you will see Chinese characters and sometimes a little bit of English written underneath them. The third language is Greek. There are many people who speak Greek in the riding of Beaches—East York. I know all of those self-help agencies and those geographical agencies where people are very proud of where they come from, whether it be Epirus or Tripolis or any of the towns or regions of Greece. They

all have Greek names, and they all have Greek letters on them. You have to go inside and ask sometimes to find out what the English equivalent is unless you're familiar with the Greek alphabet. I think he's made that point very well.

He also made the point about having a volunteer desk. Surely, that is an idea that should be considered, because if you need help, you don't need it in the form that is in this bill, but somebody who can actually be on the other end of the phone who can assist you to make sure that you make the right decision in a timely manner. I think those are good ideas he came up with. I hope—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Ouestions and comments?

1630

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to have a couple of minutes to comment in support of Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-for-profit corporations. I've noted while I've been listening to the debate this afternoon that both the member from Whitby—Oshawa and the member from Welland have generally had comments that are quite positive, and that's because I think we all share some common experience. Although the two members opposite are lawyers and I'm not a lawyer, I have dealt on occasion with not-for-profit boards, and they have certainly expressed a number of concerns over the years—this is over many, many years, because it's a long time since this act has been amended.

The legal requirements you have to go through to set up a not-for-profit corporation are extraordinarily convoluted. For the non-lawyers of the world—you get into the big not-for-profits and they often do deliberately have a lawyer on the board, but the smaller not-for-profit corporations rarely have a lawyer on the board. If they don't have somebody who will do the work pro bono, it's extraordinarily cost-prohibitive to get the work done to incorporate.

It's important that we retain accountability, but it's also important that we deal with issues like ease of incorporation. This issue around personal liability is huge, and really does stand in the way of good people serving on wonderful not-for-profits. Sorting out this whole issue of personal liability will make life much, much easier for people who are recruiting for not-for-profit boards.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I very much enjoyed the member from Welland's dissertation, especially the little wander down his memory lane of last weekend and the restaurants he visited and the people he met. It adds an element to the debate in this House, and I think an important element, in that it reminds us that we are all here to serve the people in our constituencies—not only the people who voted for us but all the people who live in our constituencies—and it's an important reminder.

This bill purports to help the volunteer groups in our constituencies that add so much to the quality of our lives. On other side of the coin, I think we have all heard

the horror stories as well, not only the people who help and do wonderful work, but also the people who take advantage of a charity's status. They may raise a considerable amount of money over the course of the year, purportedly for a good cause, and are able to pay themselves a nice salary out of that fundraising. And the charity for which they are working gets precious little money, in that the administration costs can, in some cases, amount to 100%, but in many cases amount to 60%, 70% or 80%, of the money that comes in.

Those are the kinds of things that have to be protected against. When we get into the nuances of this bill, I hope to find that this bill stops that sort of thing, and certainly makes it extremely difficult to take advantage of the good nature of Ontarians. That's one of the sadder sides of this particular legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Welland has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Peter Kormos: People in their questions and comments raise a very interesting and difficult matter: the tension between simplifying the process of structuring a not-for-profit corporation—that is, making it simple enough; ideally, it would be simple enough that you wouldn't need a lawyer—but then maintaining a sufficiently high standard so that you protect the integrity of the process and protect the public you are relying upon for financial support through direct financial support or through various levels of government that are funnelling money from the public purse into this organization. I appreciate that that's an incredibly difficult tension. I'm interested because, of course, most of this is going to be done by regulation.

A fad—not a fad, but a technique used right now is the check-box technique, allowing people to make applications. We see them in our courts, in family courts, and so on where the choices are given. It's much easier, because it states it, and you just check it off if it applies to you. I don't know whether the ministry is planning on doing that. I don't know if they're that far advanced, but that tension between making it just simple, to the point of simplistic, to create a non-profit corporation and to operate it.

You've got your annual general meetings. I just barely recall from the old days the rigours that are required of business corporations for their annual filings and all that sort of stuff, for their annual reports and their meetings. You don't want to impose that on volunteer boards but, again, you want to protect the system. You want to protect the public either as a recipient of services or as a payer of funds to these organizations. You certainly don't want to open the doors to rip-off artists and scams or people who create these corporations willy-nilly for less-than-integrous motives.

Once again, I'm looking forward to this going into committee. I think it will be a most interesting process. It remains to be seen whether Paul Miller will beat me on the committee participation, but I'm going to do my best to make sure I'm there.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, the proposed bill, which is in front of the House and we're debating today.

I wanted to bring a little bit of my personal experience to this very important issue from my life before coming into politics, and that is, being a lawyer and practising law in Ottawa and having the opportunity to help many not-for-profit corporations comply with the requirements and, in fact, the opportunity to work with a lot of community groups and helping them incorporate under the current legislation, which would be replaced by this proposed act. On top of all that is sitting on many boards and sort of helping them out as to how to navigate with compliance issues.

My experience has been that you've got some really good people in the community—I think all of us have the same experience—who want to help out. They have good ideas which they want to engage in to help their particular community. One of the ways to do it is to create this new organization and to incorporate as a not-for-profit.

The current legislation—I could literally go through it provision by provision—is not the easiest piece of legislation to navigate. These are people who want to do good in the community by creating a not-for-profit organization and getting down to the business of what they want to do to help the neighbourhood, the society, be a better place.

But the current regime is so complicated that they have to retain a lawyer. These are community people who obviously don't have the means to do that, to engage a lawyer and then go through that whole process of filling out all the documents. You have to write the articles of incorporation and the purpose clause within the thing, whether it's for a religious purpose or a community purpose. I can picture all the guidelines that exist on the Ministry of Consumer Services website right now, which one has to go through. It's a tedious, complicated process which one has to engage in.

Before I go further, I don't know if I mentioned, Madam Speaker, that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Toronto Centre. I think I probably should have done that earlier, so I just did that.

As I was saying, it is a tedious process which one has to go through and has to engage in. It's complicated, it's expensive, and I think it has a serious impact on the morale of individuals, the group of people who are trying to do good things because now, all of a sudden, they're stuck in bureaucracy. They're stuck in all this legalese to make sure that, obviously, they're doing the right thing and they're doing it in the right fashion, the right manner, so they don't run into trouble with the law. Of course, lawyers are involved. My experience was that, in a lot of these instances, I assisted these groups on a pro bono basis because, again, they didn't have the money to deal with this.

1640

There's a second part of the equation, because if they want to raise dollars and have a charitable status, then

they have to deal with the Canada Revenue Agency, which is a whole different game. It's far more complicated. After the tragedy of 9/11, it got even more complicated, especially if you're dealing with religious groups, because there are all kinds of concerns around whether the money is being raised for the right purpose and what the money is being used for. We won't even go there; that's at the federal level. But just the incorporation part at the provincial level, having a not-for-profit incorporation, is complicated.

Then you compound that whole issue with the length of time it takes to do the incorporation. That's even more where—again, these are motivated individuals, a group of people who want to start doing the good stuff they want to do under the new organization they want to create. They want to move ahead. They have ideas. They have energy. But they can't do anything, really, until they are a legal entity. There are liability issues. There are issues around what you can do and what you cannot do, and that causes serious concern. In the current mechanism, it could take six to eight weeks, and if the good people at the ministry have questions then they'll come back, and then there's back-and-forth correspondence that takes place. It could be longer.

All of these things combined can have quite a detrimental effect on the operation of not-for-profit corporations in the province of Ontario. It can have a serious impact on the people who are trying to get good things done in their community and put in effect the good ideas they have put in place. That's why I am very supportive of this bill. It's the right step that we should revisit the current law and see how we can simplify it: how we can cut the red tape, how we can make it encouraging for community groups to make sure that they are able to incorporate a not-for-profit corporation in a manner that is simple and easy to navigate.

The current legislation, as I understand it and according to the notes I have in front of me, has not been substantially revised since 1953. A lot has changed since 1953. I mean, we are in 2010. The way we do business has changed since 1953. If you just take the component around technology, a lot has changed since 1953. We have to take into account all these things to ensure that we create, again, tools in the way our government works which make life simpler and easier for people in communities who are impacted or affected by the government, especially the kind of people who are trying to create a not-for-profit corporation to progress something further in their community, be it because they are a religious group or because they are a group around social justice, an environmental group, whatever the case might be—so they have the means.

So what is this bill trying to do? How is it going to create significant benefits for the not-for-profit sector? Well, one of the things, as I mentioned, is simplifying enormously the incorporation process, which could be completed in three to five working days. Wow; I mean, that's incredible. Like I said, on average it's almost six to eight weeks that it takes to do this, and I think that alone

is a right step to make sure that we are able to allow for these people to continue in the work they want to do and which they've come together to do with their good ideas.

Corporate governance and accountability is also an important aspect. We need to make sure that there is some sort of a statutory duty of care, which is contemplated in this legislation. Again, we have come a long way in terms of corporate governance principles, which are becoming more and more part and parcel of our environment, and we need to make sure that those are accounted for as well.

I think that providing protection to directors and officers for personal liability is also very important because, again, these are community people. These are individuals who are your friends and my friends, and it probably includes all of us as well. I think all of us in this House have at some point sat on some board of a not-for-profit organization or have been involved in creating one, been champions of good ideas in our community, so we know exactly the kind of work that that goes on. These are volunteers who are doing the good work, so we need to make sure that there's some sort of protection for them as well.

Transparency is important in terms of access to financial information to make sure that we've got some sort of accountability measures in place so there is no malfeasance taking place. That's an important issue as well.

These are some of the things which I think very much attract me in this legislation to create an modern piece of legislation which fits into the reality of Ontario today, moving forward, making sure that our not-for-profit corporations remain a vibrant part of our community in a manner that all the good work that they're doing in enhancing and protecting an environment and moving forward with social justice causes, a diversity of religious groups who contribute to society—for all of those reasons I'm very much in support of this bill and I urge other members to vote in favour as well.

As I mentioned earlier, I look forward to hearing from my friend from Toronto Centre.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Toronto Centre.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: This is a bill that's very near and dear to my heart. I've spent most of my life working in the not-for-profit sector. I've been the chief executive officer of a number of charitable not-for-profit organizations, as well as the chair of federal crown, arm's-length, not-for-profit organizations. They do a very important job.

I was somewhat amused—I was unfortunately out of the House when my name came up in question period. Some people whose attention span doesn't allow them to read more than a short tweet and then arrive at that as a substantial question would be well advised to read the work, because the issue was carbon pricing—the question that was asked. And I hope the members will take time to read it. It was a paper I co-authored with a fellow named David McLaughlin, a very brilliant environmentalist, economist, a former deputy minister in Bernard Lord's New Brunswick government, former chief of staff to Jim Flaherty, currently the chief executive officer of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, of which I was chair.

I and 21 volunteers, appointed by Prime Minister Harper, did what was unique—one of the reasons that we have arm's-length agencies—in that we wrote a comprehensive carbon pricing strategy for the federal government. That kind of process only is possible when you've got properly structured para-public, not-for-profit and non-governmental organizations in it. It was interesting as well—and I hope all members will read it—because it really is the foundation for carbon pricing strategies in this country and has been adopted by both Sweden and Norway as the basis for those, and actually has very little to do with carbon taxes.

It's particularly interesting to me because that's what not-for-profit organizations bring. They bring extraordinary value. I was president of the Canadian Urban Institute, which was founded by David Crombie and Richard Gilbert and a number of others, by the city of Toronto and by Dale Richmond, who was the CAO of Metro at the time. There was a feeling that the municipal infrastructure could not generate enough innovation and arm's-length creativity because the public service was so engaged in service delivery and fairness that para-public partnership organizations like the Canadian Urban Institute and, later, the Centre for Sustainable Transportation were created. They produced a huge volume of research and work out of something that is neither private sector nor public sector but brings players in the community together on common ground.

For the last 50 years in Ontario our not-for-profit legislation has really lacked the ability to do that. It has inhibited the development of one of the most important economic sectors in Canada. One of my colleagues, a friend from the Progressive Conservative Party, the member from York-Simcoe, I thought very articulately outlined the value of this; that Canada is the secondlargest country, has the second-largest NGO community per capita. I think Toronto is about fourth in the world among cities for its NGO sector. I think we've never actually had a not-for-profit sector in Ontario, even though it is one of our largest sectors for employment and faces huge challenges. It faces challenges because it is more transparent and more sensitive to things like accelerated rent, finding affordable places to rent, managing costs and the level of transparency it has to manage.

1650

Why is this bill important to all those things? What I'm going to talk about now is not really the formulation of great ideas, but the conditions that are necessary to support them. One of the big problems is that our previous legislation for not-for-profits basically treated them as for-profit corporations. You expect directors who have a pecuniary interest, who actually generate personal wealth from the for-profit business, to have a higher risk

and liability when they do that, and they manage in a higher-risk environment.

When someone comes onto the board of a not-forprofit organization, as we did at the Canadian Urban Institute, it's very hard to get high-calibre accountants and people with the kind of breadth of experience you need in international affairs—we had former high commissioners and ambassadors on—because the exposure and liability is huge. The Canadian Urban Institute, of which I was the chief executive officer, was working in some of the most dangerous parts of the world. We were sending staff into places—we were in Bosnia in the middle of the war, we have a group right now in the Ukraine and we have several folks in different parts of Africa. The personal liability for that; the scale of contracts that the Canadian Urban Institute manages for CIDA and projects with the World Bank—a \$16.5-million project to do adaptive climate change strategies for municipalities in the Philippines—the level of liability when you have engineering work, economists and planners, all with certain levels of professional risk; you have no profit margin, and everything you make is reinvested: To maintain the kind of calibre that not-for-profit boards have to maintain is very difficult to attract when they have the same kind of liability.

The default position has been to buy very expensive directors' insurance, which can become very cost-prohibitive to organizations that have very narrow margins. I'm glad to see that as a major focus of this bill. It creates conditions that allow the NGO sector to have a board of directors.

The other thing is that it allows not-for-profit corporations to engage in commercial activities where the revenues are reinvested in the corporation to support its not-for-profit purposes. To give you my own personal example, when I was CEO of the Canadian Urban Institute, our revenues grew by \$3 million in one year. Most of that was from contracts we had with international agencies and municipalities. Our profit for that year was \$12,000, which was reinvested. That's the level of margin. You have a \$6-million or \$7-million organization that's finishing its year often tens of thousands of dollars in the black, and all of that gets reinvested.

The challenge has always been—and anyone who has been close to or active in the NGO community knowsthat most NGOs, like Pollution Probe, the Canadian Urban Institute, Sustainable Cities, any of those that are not foundation-based or do not rely on government grants, have to raise all their own money. In Ontarioand the move in the public sector across Canada and the United States is that there is no grants program like there is for universities or there is for not-for-profits in the United States—we have actually grown this sector almost in spite of ourselves, because not-for-profits are not set up to compete with consulting companies for contracts. But the response of the federal government, most municipalities today and most provinces is to have NGOs and non-governmental organizations, which are trying to build civil society capacity, behave almost like consulting firms to sustain themselves.

We have had nothing in law that actually makes a legal determination about what those relationships are like compared to the charitable giving and the fundraising dinners. In the case many of you are familiar with-I know my friends from Beaches-East York and Ottawa Centre would be—things like urban leadership awards right down to education programs for students and student placements, personal development and outreach all have to be sorted out to the satisfaction of the Canada Revenue Agency, but there is nothing in law in Ontario, or in most provinces save Saskatchewanbecause we're joining Saskatchewan now—that actually regulates those outcomes and determines how that money is recorded. Just simply counting for sales tax—and I've got to tell you, the harmonized sales tax is a blessing for the NGO community, because I can tell you, having to manage two sales taxes in the NGO sector was horrific.

The final place is that this law actually makes the amalgamation of NGOs possible. Many smaller non-governmental organizations grow and merge with others. The old legislation, if you look at it, made that a night-mare. The Canadian Urban Institute was trying to merge with the International Centre for Sustainable Cities in Vancouver—it's a two-and-a-half-year process. When this legislation is passed, it will take about two months to do it. It is literally the cost in friction and time of a highly inefficient system, where our corporate legislation was heavily tilted to for-profit corporations.

Why is this legislation so good? I know it was two years ago, but the consultation the government took, long before I had the pleasure of being part of this Legislature, was well known, deep, and met the concerns of the larger community. Is it perfect? Is it everything that everybody wanted? No. But this bill is very practical, unexciting and boring to most people. No one's going to put in their election literature, "I voted for the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act," but to one of the largest and most important sectors, this will mean more jobs, it will reduce the cost in friction of managing those groups, it will make money easier to raise and it will make the management of finances and staff and contracts much easier.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: I had the opportunity and listened intently to my colleagues from Ottawa Centre and Toronto Centre and what they had to say on this bill. I'd like to thank both of them, because—I don't know if you were present in the room earlier. You may have been watching it on television when I talked about this bill being dry as dust, but you did bring some clarity to the bill and, in fact, my friend from Toronto Centre brought a great deal of clarity in terms of what it will mean to the non-profit sector, their ability to merge and their ability to not have to get such expensive liability insurance. I think, for those points, the bill needs to pass second reading.

I join with my colleague from Welland, who gave the leadoff speech on behalf of the New Democratic Party, by saying that we are generally supportive of the bill. I think what the two members from Ottawa Centre and Toronto Centre did was bring out reasons why the bill ought to be supported, why it ought to go for second reading. I don't know how much debate there is going to be or whether I will actually have an opportunity to speak to the bill, so I would just like to state for the record as well that I intend to support this bill, mindful that there are at least a couple of avenues that need to be explored.

One of them is the mandatory use of English and French, because I think that that is a key point in our multicultural and multilingual province, that we ought to allow incorporations and signs and things in other languages.

The second is the whole issue of a volunteer desk. Although my colleagues didn't speak of that, I think that that, too, is an idea that is worth exploring. For all the good reasons that you brought up, the pair of you, I commend you for your speeches and thank you for bringing those facts to the Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: I'm more than pleased to join colleagues here in the Legislature today in the endorsement that seems to be quite general of this piece of legislation, the new Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. The member from Toronto Centre said that perhaps it appears somewhat boring and dull, but often some of the most boring and dull changes that are required of a legislative body are indeed the most requisite.

Having not, perhaps, the same amount of experience he has in dealing with the not-for-profit sector, still, at another time and in another place, I frequently related to NGOs or to not-for-profits and saw the restrictions that they laboured under, particularly in their ability to draw the kind of talent and experience that they needed to their boards.

I remember the first time there was a lawsuit, a number of years ago, on the matter of personal liability, being intertwined as it then was with corporate responsibility, it indeed put a fear into the sector and made many of us very concerned as to how we would draw the kind of persons we needed on those boards. So while the act makes many changes, all of them very laudatory, that one in particular struck me as one that we should note, and I'm glad other colleagues in the House have done so. 1700

It also allows the not-for-profits to engage in commercial activities—and that, too, is very, very important—so that they're able to reinvest the profits from those activities into the very reason for which they were created.

There are many good aspects of this bill. I commend it. I hope that it will indeed enjoy the support from all members of the House when we come to a vote a little later in the day.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I was here earlier today on Bill 65, the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010. We all

agree, and our critic, Julia Munro from York-Simcoe, has made it clear to us that there are many good provisions in the bill. Let's be square about that. It's about time the bill is updated. I don't know what has taken them so long. In eight years, it clearly wasn't a priority for them.

But here's the real issue: There are some confusing sections, but the main message from our side, from our leader, Tim Hudak, is to recognize, especially during the month of May, that this is volunteer recognition time. Each of us in our ridings has been there and recognized those people that make—everyone from Boy Scouts to hockey to Meals on Wheels to service organizations.

Ms. Munro led a consultation on behalf of our leader at the time, Mike Harris, on volunteerism in Ontario, recognizing that it is an important part of the social infrastructure of Ontario. In Canada, I think there are 161,000 not-for-profit charities. Over half of those are right here in Ontario. We should be respectful of the time and talent these people contribute to those communities, community organizations and, indeed, you could argue, to our province when it comes to athletics and other things. It just makes our society much more friendly and raises the quality of life for everyone in Ontario.

But here's the point: Until we resolve some of the issues on liability for volunteer board members—and there is a section in here. I haven't seen the details nor have I been briefed, but there's a case where they have to make clarity an issue so that these people that are rendering a service, free of charge 99% of the time, in these not-for-profit companies—we need that assurance that this will be resolved at least, amongst other things.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

The member from Toronto Centre has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank the many members who spoke: my colleague from Barrie, who has seen this through the lens of federal government; my colleague from Beaches—East York, who has been a long-time advocate for the sector and is very familiar with it from his time as mayor and his important involvement in FCM; and my friend from Durham.

A couple of things: One is that subsection 11(2) stated that the names could only be in English or French, but subsection 11(6) of this proposed act allows for a corporation to use a name in any language as long as the articles of incorporation allow for it. So it does open it up to that, and maybe we could look at that more in committee.

I don't think that this bill will likely come back here unchanged. I think that the enormity of this sector and the number of people we have to hear from at committee is very important, so I think getting it to committee is very important.

I also just want to say again that the member from York-Simcoe, I thought, gave a very articulate presentation earlier on the sector, and I appreciate knowing that there are other colleagues in the House who value the sector as much.

Finally, the suggestion of a volunteer bureau by the member from Beaches-East York, I think, if I can get his attention for a second, is an important suggestion. I hope that, as someone who came from the sector—many states and provinces have not realized the enormity of the economic development and job creation opportunities that come from this sector. I think this government does, and I'm hoping this will be something that will enjoy broad support across all parties, because I think all of us place a high value on this sector.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'm very disappointed that the government has decided to withdraw from our agreement that we had in this House about how this House would proceed for the next two weeks—three weeks, really, but we have a week off. In the last two weeks of any Legislature, there are always some disagreements about how things proceed. This time we had something put in place that would have seen the debate take place over the course of the last two weeks, and it would have been fairly constructive, I think. We would have had an opposition day. That was our part of the deal, and your part of the deal was that you got a number of bills passed and discussed.

Today, the government House leader has decided to withdraw her support for that agreement. And if we can't have support in this House, if we can't have co-operation, I can see no reason to continue the debate, and I would move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye." Those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members: a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1706 to 1736.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Members will please take their seats.

Mr. Chudleigh has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour will please stand and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed will please stand and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 8; the nays are 36.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I declare the motion defeated.

Further debate?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: During the 30-minute bell, there was no conversation to fix the situation that was in place in this House, so I would move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Halton has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I declare that the nays have won the day.

This will be another 30-minute bell. Call in the members.

The division bells rang from 1738 to 1808.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The members will please take their seats.

Mr. Chudleigh has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour will please stand and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed will please stand and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 2; the nays are 28.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I declare the motion defeated.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): It being nine past the hour of 6, I declare the House adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1810.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South-Weston / York-Sud- Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington-Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia-Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough-Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough Sud-Ouest	1-
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margarett R. (LIB)	Scarborough-Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
		Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma-Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham-Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest- Nepean	_
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
D.1 (7.10)	Mississan Charles III	Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax-Pickering	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House /
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward-Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor-Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
		Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	2 Tutt of 1 csponsabilities
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby-Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	officielle
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)		Minister of the Province of (Minister 1, 127)
Correctly from 7 L Roll Collin (LID)	les Îles	et Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / Thunder Bay-Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora-Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	l'opposition officielle
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	London Passonized Party / Chaffe and and
ioiwani, mutva (1151)	Hammon Centre / Hammon-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham-Kent-Essex	1.70 VV WV . AMMINISTRATION
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West-Glanbrook / Niagara-	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
, , ,	Ouest-Glanbrook	Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges-Markham	r-g-
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton-Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock	2. Annual 1. Annual 1. Annual 1. Annual Control of the theory
ones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin-Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket-Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House I ander / I coder nonlementaine de mortine en
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea-Gore-Malton	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
eal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)		
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Nepean-Carleton	
	Mississauga-Brampton South / Mississauga-Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity-Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough- Westdale	Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa-Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa-Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services
		sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
		Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron-Bruce	Formation et des Collèges et Universités Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de
Morid: Dane (LID)	D1.1	l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

Murdoch, Bill (PC) Murray, Glen R (LIB) Naqvi, Yasir (LIB) O'Toole, John (PC) Orazietti, David (LIB) Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Circonscription York–Simcoe Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Durham Sault Ste. Marie Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Glen R (LIB) Naqvi, Yasir (LIB) O'Toole, John (PC) Orazietti, David (LIB) Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Durham Sault Ste. Marie	
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Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)		
	Kitchener-Conestoga	
	Elgin-Middlesex-London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches-East York	
1140, 11111401 (1121)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
, , ,	London-Fanshawe	
,	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
**	Northumberland-Quinte West	
, , , ,	Davenport	
	Guelph	
	Burlington	
	York West / York-Ouest	
	Thornhill	
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
		Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
, , ,	Vaughan	
	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
	Carleton-Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga-Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth-Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Elizabeth Witmer

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn

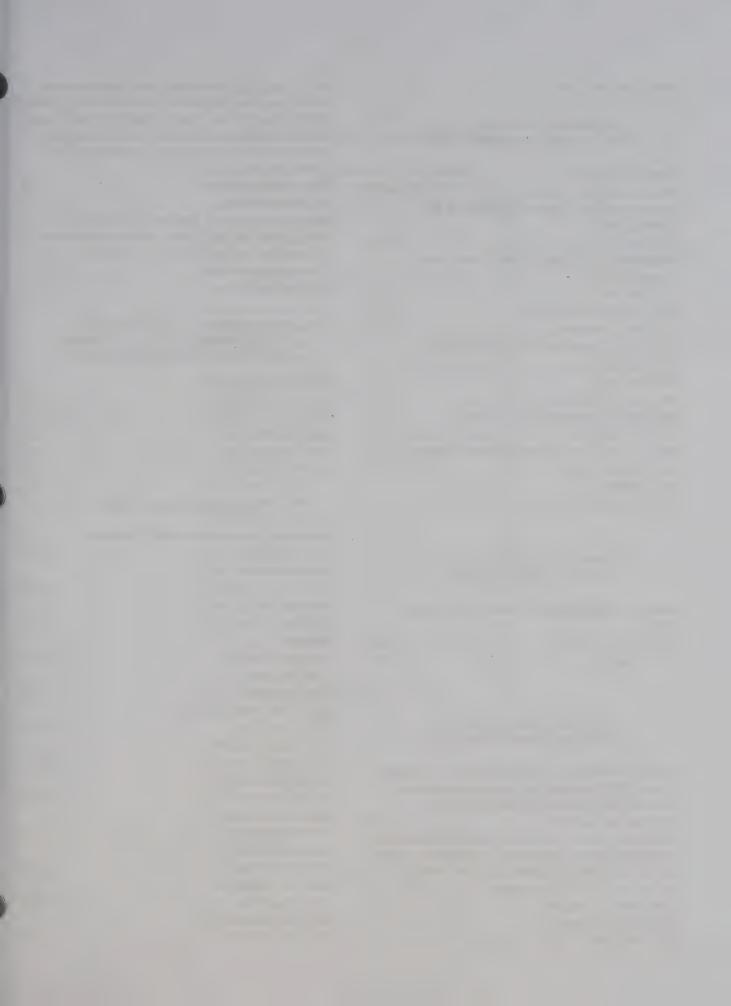
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott

Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones

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Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial





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Nº 34A

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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 39th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 39^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 18 May 2010



Speaker Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk Deborah Deller Président L'honorable Steve Peters

Greffière Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 18 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 18 mai 2010

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Sikh prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR JOBS AND GROWTH ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 POSANT LES FONDATIONS DE L'EMPLOI ET DE LA CROISSANCE

Ms. Smith, on behalf of Mr. Duncan, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 16, An Act to implement 2010 Budget measures and to enact or amend various Acts / Projet de loi 16, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2010 et édictant ou modifiant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I will be sharing the majority of my time with the member from Pickering—Scarborough East.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: This seems to have become a bit of a routine as of late, where the House leader and/or the chair of cabinet are very gracious with their time that's allocated and provide it to me.

I'm very pleased today to join in the debate on the third reading of Bill 16, our budget bill. Obviously, subject to the concurrence of this body here, we might very well see the budget bill passed in relatively short order. It's only some two months from the time our budget was first introduced; although I'm sure not a record by any means, nonetheless, a fairly expeditious process in the context of our legislative framework.

Bill 16, Creating the Foundation for Jobs and Growth Act, 2010, speaks very firmly about what the budget this year is about, and it really is about establishing a firm foundation in spite of the economic climate or in response to the economic climate. We've all seen for the past couple of years a firm foundation for jobs for those in Ontario and for growth as we move forward through, hopefully, the tail end of this recessionary period; although not clearly out of the woods yet at this point, when you look at the international situation, you understand that, but moving out of that into a time of growth.

The 2010 Ontario budget moves forward the five-year plan, the Open Ontario plan, that was introduced as part

of the throne speech. Certainly, the budget is building on the Open Ontario plan to create new jobs and growth, at the same time taking the necessary measures in a responsible fashion to eliminate the deficit we find ourselves saddled with at this point in time, in a large measure due to the global economic recession and the need to invest in infrastructure and in stimulus as a mechanism to support this province and support the need for jobs in these times. It's money well spent for infrastructure needs that had been for some time, I would suggest—certainly prior to our coming to office—sorely neglected. We need to do this to create jobs and growth, and to work toward elimination of the deficit we find ourselves in.

We've made tremendous progress, I would suggest, over the half-dozen years we've now had, and this will build on that in supporting job creation and enhancing the programs and services that Ontarians expect of us. They expect us to provide opportunities for quality education for their children, they expect quality health care in their communities, they expect that their community hospitals will be there for them when they need them and they expect that they will have the opportunity, when they need it, for skills training. Part of this budget, as in past budgets, is providing career opportunities and skills training opportunities that might not otherwise present themselves for those who find themselves dislocated in the workforce.

Health and education, and the opportunity for skills training and post-secondary education to provide young people in particular with opportunities to prepare themselves for a new economy, have been the foundation values we have formed government on, and this budget truly reflects those values in this particular economic climate. As well, in this budget we look to manage government expenditures, including compensation restraints.

We know we are showing that type of leadership on a managerial side. As well, all of us in this House have really set the stage for that. We are now well into a period of restraint ourselves when it comes to wage increases. We started that process more than two years ago, and it's going to be extended, so each of us in this body has set an example. As well, our managerial/professional staff are also experiencing similar wage restraints.

In doing that, we're respectful of the collective agreements that are in place. We respect the people who negotiated those collective agreements, and we plan to honour those collective agreements. But we've made it clear in this budget process that with a \$21-billion deficit and the need to work our way out of that deficit over a responsible period of time—cutting it in half within five years

and eliminating it within eight years—there is going to be a need for those in the broader public sector, those to whom we make transfer payments and who depend on the provincial government, to recognize that our resources are limited and there will not be the capacity to provide the types of increases on an annual basis that were available in the past. Thus, as they enter their negotiation periods, they're going to have to be cognizant of that in the business they do.

We have a plan. It's a realistic and responsible plan for elimination of the deficit within a structured period. I've already said it will be cut in half within five years and eliminated within eight. It was interesting, when we did pre-budget consultations, a number of organizations came before us. I recall that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce spoke to us-I believe we were in London at the time—and talked about eliminating the deficit. They recognized that in an ideal world, one would be able to do it very quickly. But they proposed to us at that point that we show a measured mechanism, a measured strategy to eliminate the deficit, they said, within the decade. We are effectively within that target range; we're probably slightly ahead of that range. They were speaking broadly at that point in time, but they were making a serious point that there had to be a targeted initiative to do that within that period of time or less.

In that sense, we think we took good advice from those in the business community—small business in particular—about what we need to do, at the same time acknowledging the importance of public service, health and education in particular in this province, and the need to be respectful of those who work in the public sector that we fund through transfer payments and those who have collective agreements.

If there's anything this budget does, it certainly continues to respect the importance of public services in this province. In addition, there continue to be significant investments in infrastructure. This budget follows up on the budget of last year, where we assigned some \$30 billion plus—I think it was about \$32 billion—for infrastructure through stimulus and support. Some of that was spent last year, and some is being expended through this budget year. It was part of a more than one-year program, and it's one that is being done in partnership with other orders of government. We certainly appreciate the leadership that the federal government has taken in that regard, and we appreciated the opportunity to work directly with them, since we can't do it on our own. As well, our municipal partners, that other order of government, have traditionally been supporters and partners in initiatives such as this, but this time even more importantly so. 0910

This is a very, very significant investment that the province is making, as well as the federal government in their part of it and the municipal governments, to ensure that we rebuild the infrastructure that is so sorely needed, whether that's water and sewer systems—pipes in the ground; roads that need to be built; public transit; or community facilities. Those are not only needed by com-

munities, they're not only needed to restructure the infrastructure that is deteriorating over time, but they're also needed because of the economic climate we find ourselves in, and thus the need to unfortunately run a very significant deficit at this point in time, because we need the dollars expended in infrastructure to create jobs at a time when we need to support the economy.

If one looks now, as we move through the tail end of that recessionary period, what the world is saying about Ontario and about Canada in that regard is that we seem to have had it right. We seem to have avoided the worst of the calamities that were experienced and are continuing to be experienced by our friends and neighbours south of the border. One only needs to look to Europe at this point in time, whether it's Greece, Spain, Portugal or the Celtic Tiger, Ireland, as just preliminary examples of the stresses they find themselves under. But here in Canada and in Ontario, our fiscal systems seem to have sustained us well, but we also are making the right investments to help us work our way through the process, and this budget remains a significant part of that investment.

We've seen a rebound occurring, and that's pleasing. Obviously, the GDP is increasing; the projections are very good for us, compared to where we were not that long ago. But one only needs to look at places like the auto sector, and see the General Motors of the world, which are part of my broader community in Durham and tend to be our bit of a focus, if I can speak a bit parochially in that regard, on the Durham side, the Pickering side of my riding. It doesn't exclude others, by any means, but we see now that GM has come back to life.

On my way home yesterday, I heard they have announced that they're turning their first profit in over three years. They went, I believe, from a \$6-billion loss last year to something around an \$800-million profit in their first quarter this year. So we've seen a rebound. We see the new GM vehicles on the road, and that's not to talk down any of the other manufacturers, because there is activity happening throughout that sector. But where I and my constituents live, GM is a very important part of that.

Our investments in folks like GM provided confidence. Our investments last year and going into this year to support the economy in this province will help provide people with the jobs they need and the income they need to buy those vehicles. Whether it's a Ford vehicle, a GM vehicle, a Honda being built in Alliston or a Toyota being built elsewhere in the province, those are important investments that we made that are paying dividends, and what we're doing in this budget is continuing to support jobs so that people will have the disposable income to reinvest effectively back into the economy.

The time allocated today is going to be somewhat limited, as we try to work our way through. In particular, I certainly want ample opportunity for our opposition friends to speak to their views on this budget. But I have to tell you that I'm pleased to have worked with our minister, the Honourable Dwight Duncan, in that regard. We believe this is the right budget at the right time, and I

think we're seeing that the economy is beginning to bear out the decisions we made last year. I believe that the decisions we're making this year will be equally borne out this time next year, when people are talking about the successes we have had, and will recognize this is the right budget at the right time for Ontario and the folks who live here.

That's some of what I want to say. I do have a few other things I really want to add at this point in time—as I say, I'm cognizant of the time. I want to speak a little bit about post-secondary education. I talked about infrastructure and jobs, but I want to speak briefly to postsecondary education. That's critically important if we're going to prepare primarily young people for a new economy, a new way of doing business in the world. I'm not sure we know what that's going to look like yet. We know from our initiatives that energy is an important matter. We know that water in this world is going to be an important matter. It's why we've turned our attention to those things, over the past few years, on the energy front and more currently turning our attention to water: because it's an important element not only for business. but it's an important element for each of us every day of the year.

Here in Ontario and in Canada, we are privileged to have a vast quantity of fresh water. A lot of that water, surprisingly, doesn't run south; it runs to the north. People think we have access to all this fresh water readily available, but the fresh water we actually have available to us is a little more limited than we might otherwise recognize from the use by our existing population. Nonetheless, this continent and this country are still home to a vast majority of the world's fresh water.

Saying that, there is a focus we need to have on the future. We have to prepare young people, principally, through post-secondary opportunities in colleges and universities and postgraduate work, so that they are ready for that new economy, although we don't know quite what it's going to look like. That means that through the expertise that is being developed and has developed through the professionals, the professors and others, we have to provide the opportunity for young people.

This budget is providing opportunities, some \$310 million, if I can recall the number—and I may be off by just a small amount—on an annual basis to accommodate growth funding. It will accommodate some 20,000 new students, 20,000 new places in the post-secondary system, or systems—universities and colleges primarily, as well as some training. It's important for those young people to be able to step into the new economy, to have the skills, develop skills, and with the skills they have to be ready to take them forward in an entrepreneurial fashion.

It's not a matter, anymore, of training someone and sending them out to the job. We now have to have young people with skills, with the capacity to come out of the education system, and learning—not having finished that process and thinking they're ready to do the job—they have to come out of that hungry to learn, hungry for entrepreneurship, hungry to take advantage of the expertise,

the mentorship that can happen in a corporate entity or in a public sector entity, and we need those young people with the right mindset to do that. Part of these investments, in my view, will provide them that opportunity.

I have young people in my family. My children now have finished their university careers. My youngest is a couple of years out of university but still on a learning curve—a very steep learning curve, I might add. I look forward at this point to my grandchildren, three of whom are now in their teens, and one approaching that era—it won't be long before they're in our college and university systems. I'm hopeful that's where they will be. I want them to have the kind of opportunities in those systems that will prepare them to be leaders in the economy and leaders in the community when they leave those institutions and move into the workplace.

It's not to ignore at all those older workers. We are working jointly with the federal government on the target initiative for older workers. That's an agreement we have with the federal government, and it's targeted at hard-hit communities. There are those older workers, those who are displaced in this economy, those who do not have the skills necessary to readily step into these new roles. We have an obligation also to provide support where possible for those older workers in targeted communities that have been hard hit, to give them the kinds of opportunities they need to be able to work through the balance of their working career before they are ready to move into some other phase of their life, to provide them with a new set of skills where the demands are there for them to be able to take advantage of that. Ideally, in a perfect world, you don't want to dislocate people at the end of their careers and have them pick up their family and move, and those kinds of things. So we want to work within those communities that have been hard hit and help to retrain those particular workers so they can stay within their overall communities.

This budget, the 2010-11 budget, focuses on a number of issues. It certainly focuses on public service, which we have done. It focuses on the economy from the context of our infrastructure investment. It focuses on post-secondary education for young people. It focuses on those targeted workers, older workers who are dislocated. It pays attention to the deficit that we have, with a targeted time frame in which to eliminate that deficit, and cut it in half within a five-year time frame.

I believe firmly that a year from now the media and others will be speaking about this budget having been the right budget at the right time, in my view the same way they're speaking about last year's budget now. If we look at the media and the success Ontario has had, they're speaking about Ontario having done the right things at the right time for Ontarians.

Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity. Members of the House, I look forward to the balance of the debate. With the will of this House, we'll see our budget bill concluded in relatively short order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to comment on Bill 16, which is the main budget bill put forward by the government. I'd like to begin by talking a bit about the process by which it's passing, and that is that the bill has been time-allocated. It is a substantial bill; there's some 31 schedules as part of it. The government has time-allocated the bill so it's on a very shortened time frame for passing through the Legislature.

In fact, there was but one day of public hearings—some five hours—for those people interested in commenting on the bill to have their say—with very little notice, I might add, for those interested. In fact, there was so little notice that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario missed the deadline for written comment. On the eve of the clause-by-clause about to occur, AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, was sending out letters and contacting MPPs, quite concerned about the fact that the result of one of the provisions in this bill—I think it was the insurance schedule—would be that municipalities would be forced to have much higher insurance premiums, and they were quite concerned about this.

That just outlines the flawed process that the government is using; they're rushing it through. In fact, with that specific schedule that was going to affect municipalities, the government voted against a section of their own bill in reaction to that. But as I pointed out, the municipalities missed the deadline for written submissions and missed the opportunity to come before the committee for the public hearings as well.

Who knows what else is hidden in this piece of legislation? They have this flawed process, very much demonstrated last week with Bill 44, which is the northern energy bill. That was the mother of all time allocation motions, I would say, the most rushed I've ever seen; so much so that I went to the subcommittee meeting on, I think, Tuesday, with a Wednesday deadline for hearings on Thursday. So, surprise, surprise, nobody made a written submission and nobody showed up for pubic hearings, it was so rushed. And there were no amendments to that particular bill. That was the northern energy bill, and I'm surprised it wasn't actually part of this one. I'm not quite sure why the government is insisting on rushing things through, thereby making mistakes.

Those who did come before the committee were mainly pharmacists, because they were aware, and became aware, that two schedules of the bill—schedule 5, the Drug Interchangeability and Dispensing Fee Act, and one other schedule, further along here—quite drastically affect them and the way they've been doing business. We heard from a lot of pharmacists during the five hours of public hearings. The message that came from the pharmacists is that they support reducing the costs of generic drugs, they support doing away with the professional allowance that they've been receiving, but they just need a little time to make those changes because they've been operating under a certain business model and it's being changed dramatically by the government. I proposed an amendment at committee to give them a little time to

make the transition. Unfortunately, the government voted that and other amendments down.

I know the government is trying to characterize them as Big Pharma, but it's the small pharmacies like, in my riding, Steve Vandermolen, who has a Gravenhurst pharmacy, or Darl Dillabough in Bracebridge, or Bill Coon or Helen Luvison, or Gordon Lane with Lane Family Pharmacy in Parry Sound, that will be most dramatically affected by this quick change.

As I say, the pharmacies are interested in lower generic drug prices and doing away with professional fees. They just need a little time to get there, because we have this wonky system right now where they fill a prescription under the Ontario drug benefit plan and they get paid \$7 even though the real cost is \$14, and then the difference gets made up through this professional fee. They don't want to see that. They'd rather be paid the \$14, as Alberta does, and some reasonable profit. Then they'd be able to continue to provide the front-line health services that our seniors and families count on.

In fact, I went and visited Steve Vandermolen at the Gravenhurst pharmacy last week—they were putting on a clinic— and there talked to folks who were coming in. They made it very clear to me how much they rely on the advice of the pharmacists. There were people there who said, "If we have some small problem, we'll come and see our pharmacist because it takes us three weeks to get an appointment with the doctor and usually, in most cases, the pharmacist is able to explain and help us or give us advice—sometimes the advice is, 'Go see your doctor'—but often cases they are able to provide help for."

When I went to the clinic, they were doing a photo op as well, and they did a blood sample on me. I found out my blood sugar is a little low, so I learned something myself going to the clinic that day.

It's these small pharmacies that are most at risk with the draconian measures the government is taking and this rush process that they are involved with, especially in rural and northern Ontario. The people in rural and northern Ontario, families and seniors, depend on those small pharmacies for the front-line health services.

Other parts of the bill—I mean, there are 31 schedules and it's time-allocated. We get all of 20 minutes in total for third reading. I'm going to be sharing that time with another one of my colleagues, so I obviously can't cover the whole bill itself in any detail whatsoever.

Another schedule, though, in the bill is the LHIN review, the local health integration network review; postponing that is part of this bill. Maybe that's why they're trying to rush it through, because they don't want too much attention. When the local health integration network legislation passed in 2006, it required a review by March 2010. The date came and passed, and the government didn't do the review on their new mid-level health bureaucracy. As a result, now they're putting in legislation to postpone that review, conveniently, until after the next election.

As the opposition, we see these new bureaucracies as a diversion of money from the front-line health services.

We think the review should have occurred when it was originally stated. I note that the problem of the government not complying with its own legislation has actually now been sent to the Legislative Assembly committee to deal with, although that committee has to, first of all, deal with another issue, the issue of members being restrained from being able to make it to the budget delivery on time on budget day of this year.

The parliamentary assistant talked about some other aspects of the budget bill. He talked about compensation restraint and the measures the government is taking. I simply say that it's half-hearted, and they are creating a lot of problems. We had the Ontario Hospital Association come before the committee and point out how they have non-unionized and unionized workers in different hospitals doing the same jobs, and now all of a sudden this is going to create great problems for them because the government is not restraining unionized workers, in most cases, until after the next election, but they are immediately freezing the wages of non-union workers, although with some loopholes to get around it in their case as well. This is creating problems, as in the case of hospitals, where they have some unionized and some non-unionized workers in some cases doing the same job.

About 50% of the budget is wages; most of those wages are unionized; most of the contracts don't come due until after the next election. So, really, despite the fact we have record deficits, despite the fact that Dalton McGuinty is on track to double the Ontario debt by 2012—that's a little scary. It took 23 Premiers to get to the debt of \$140 billion we had when Dalton McGuinty came into power in 2003, and he will have doubled that by 2012. That is something to think about. It's something that we all will have to bear and pay our way out of with future restraint.

The parliamentary assistant was talking about the deficit reduction plan. It's just not a credible plan. They're talking about balancing the budget by 2017-18. That's beyond two provincial elections, and it's probably beyond a typical economic cycle as well. What happens when we have the next recession? That's when government has to spend money, and if they still haven't balanced the budget, we will end up getting further in the hole without balancing the budget.

I should just point out in wrapping up, because I'm already out of time, the fact that it's not a revenue problem. This year, they're budgeting on record revenues of \$107 billion—\$107 billion. The problem is they're also setting a record for spending: \$127 billion, so roughly a \$20-billion deficit planned again for this year. It was \$21.3 billion last year. The government has increased spending some 70% since coming to power. They just can't control spending. Their restraint measures are half-hearted and problematic. I have no hope that if this government was in power for 100 years they would ever—will ever—balance the budget going into the

I have real concern about the fact that the government is doubling the debt in the province and what that's going

future.

to mean for the future of the province—all the interest payments, the risk of interest rates going up. We all know they're at historic lows, but they're going to be going up. I certainly have real concerns that we are dealing with a budget bill with 31 schedules in such a tightened time frame. With that, I'll close.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a privilege to be able to rise here today and speak to Bill 16, the budget bill. Any budget bill addresses the priorities and values of the government that presents it. The reality here, as my colleague has said, is that the budget is very large; it covers a very broad scope, and it is very difficult to go through it in a way that one could call thorough. What I hope to do, though, this morning is address what I see as a number of the key elements in this budget, to give people some sense of the government's priorities and values.

The first thing I want to address is the unwritten part of this budget. The reality is that the McGuinty government is considering selling off Ontario. It's considering selling off some of the most productive and strategic assets that this province has: Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One, the LCBO, Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. We in this province are very familiar with what happens when a government facing an election and needing quick cash decides to sell off an asset to pay down the deficit and give it a little money to spread cheer and happiness around the province. We saw that with the Highway 407 deal, which people in this province still are suffering from, still losing value on, still feeling the sting of those private collections against their driving ability in Ontario.

The McGuinty government has met with the editorial board of the Globe and Mail, and the phrase that was quoted was that they don't want to look as though they are "burning the furniture" to keep the house warm. And you're right: They don't want to look like that, but that may well be what they are doing. In fact, I believe that is what they are doing, but they don't want it to look like that. So they are madly casting about for an expenditure that will be attractive enough that they can sell that sale, that they can get the political buy-in for cutting loose or starting the process of cutting loose some of the most critical assets in this province.

If, in fact, Ontario sold off Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One, the LCBO and the lottery and gaming commission, we'd lose more than \$3 in revenue for every \$2 that would be saved on debt servicing. In total, Ontario taxpayers would come out half a billion dollars poorer every year in lost revenue. Those four entities, those four bodies, operations, generate about \$4 billion a year. If you sell them off, you have to get a very high return on your investment to make up for what's lost. If you sell them off, you get rid of those strategic levers that we need in this province to build our economy in the decades to come. Yet this part of the budget, so far unwritten, still the subject of a mad scramble to find political cover, unfolds behind closed doors.

It speaks volumes as to who the consultants were. Who were the financial advisers hired to pull together this deal? The company Goldman Sachs, a Wall Street investment banker, was hired by Dalton McGuinty to do the work, to do the analysis, to present the case and the opportunities for this.

As you are well aware, Goldman Sachs has currently been charged with fraud by the Securities and Exchange Commission in the United States. According to the New York Times, they're under criminal investigation. According to the New York Times, their former client AIG, one of the larger insurance companies in the world—one that got badly burned in the subprime mortgage catastrophe—has ended their financial relationship with Goldman Sachs.

This is the company that's advising Ontario on how to dispose of its assets. This is the company that has recently testified before the American Congress, a company whose future is called into question by American law-makers, who have called for a criminal probe of its activities. That is the Premier's consultant; that is the Premier's adviser. That's extraordinary to me.

I recently asked the Premier about Goldman Sachs. I talked about the recent revelations in newspapers about charges and investigations. It was interesting, what the Premier had to say: "I gather my colleague is making reference to some contractual arrangement that our government may have entered into with Goldman Sachs." He held them out here, at arm's length. He knew that there was a taint there that he didn't want on himself. He didn't get rid of them. He didn't say, "When I get their report, I will shred it." He just wanted to make sure he didn't have any political damage.

This is extraordinary. This is the unwritten part of the budget that we are debating today, a part that will be as consequential to this province as any other debate that we have. I raise this issue not only because it's a significant piece of the budget that should be debated, but also because I'm fearful that between the time this House rises in the next few weeks and the fall, Goldman Sachs and Dalton McGuinty will have done a deal that we will actually not have an opportunity to debate in this House. That is a very, very scary prospect for this province.

Having spoken about the unwritten part of this budget and the authors behind the scenes and their current state, I want to talk about the impact of this budget on public transit. I'll talk first about Toronto because that's the most visible part of the iceberg, that's the most visible issue and one that, frankly, people across Toronto are upset with. The government has said that it is going to save \$4 billion by pushing back Transit City, an investment to put light rail vehicles and high-speed streetcars throughout suburban Toronto so people can get places quickly, so people who are currently isolated don't have to stand on street corners and watch bus after bus after bus, packed to the rafters, pass them while they wait, desperately trying to get to work on time. That cut, called a delay, is a pushback until after the next election, making the reality of Transit City far more uncertain. Beyond that, when we see the truncated plans, the chopped-up plans, that

come from Metrolinx on the revisions to what's left after that funding is supposed to come back, we can see that the city of Toronto gets far less than it would have otherwise.

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Madam Speaker, as you are well aware, in the greater Toronto area congestion costs our economy about \$6 billion a year. Any intelligent government would be acting to reduce that burden on our economy. Any intelligent government would be saying, "If we want the economy of this urban region to prosper and grow, then we need to remove those things that are strangling it." Instead, this government is stepping backwards. It is stepping backwards with the cut to Transit City and with the truncation of any future plan. This is a blow to the city and an expression of where this government is at when it comes to transit. This government cancelled the Ontario bus replacement program. What they've said to municipalities is, "Now the gas tax money, which was flowing to help you with your transit costs—you can use it to buy buses." What it sounds like is they've cut this but in fact they are providing for it over here. No, they're taking an expense, moving it into an already stretched and stressed budget line and saying, "Make do with this smaller amount." So for Hamilton, London, Ottawa, Windsor, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Kingston, cities all over this province that have transit systems—they're not Toronto's transit system; it's a different scale of transit system, transit systems that people rely on, on a daily basis, transit systems that allow people to get to work, allow people to see their families, allow people to live the kind of lives they want. Those transit systems will be poorer when this budget is passed. Those transit systems will be stretched and stressed. That speaks to the values of this government.

In this budget there's barely any mention of action on climate change. In fact, I can see why this government wouldn't want to talk about climate change in this budget. If you cast back prior to Christmas, the report from the climate secretariat showed that this government was not going to meet its own goals, that the plans it had in place to deal with climate change were not going to succeed; they were going to fail. Then the Environmental Commissioner came along. He did his analysis and he concurred: Yes, this plan will not meet the requirements, the targets set by this government, and those targets already were weak. In a budget you get to see whether a government will put its money where its mouth is. Are they in fact substantially committed to dealing with climate change, or not? Well, the reality in this budget is that there's less money for transit, and that means more car use. Transportation is already about a third of the global warming gases, the greenhouse gases that are driving climate change in this province. This government has not answered questions when they've been put to it. What are the implications for your climate plan of the cuts to Transit City and other transit investments in Ontario? They have no answer. I guess no answer is a better answer than saying, "Well, in fact, we are undercutting our climate plan and we will fall even further behind in meeting the targets that we had set." That's the real answer from this budget; that's the real environmental commitment: "We will not address the critical issues that need to be addressed to meet our targets."

I want to talk about this budget and its impact on poverty. On Friday, at the invitation of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, I went to the South Riverdale Community Health Centre in my riding, where the medical staff deal with a variety of people who have severe medical conditions, compound, sometimes mental health coupled with diabetes, coupled with other disabilities that make life very difficult for these people. What the staff had to say at the South Riverdale Community Health Centre was that in fact they saw far more illness arising out of these cuts to the special diet allowance. Because if you have diabetes, if you have other chronic diseases like MS and you are not able to get an adequate quantity and quality of food, you get sicker, and when you get sicker, you may well wind up in hospital at extraordinary expense to the people of Ontario.

This government has, in the transit area, ignored an investment that will cut long-term costs for our economy. In the cut of the special diet allowance for those who are on Ontario Works or ODSP, it has decided that large numbers of people are going to wind up in hospital, where they will be treated for conditions that, at their core, really just require enough food. That's the critical thing: People need food, and if you cut the allowance that allows them to eat decently, you are condemning them individually to misery and making sure that we, as a society, will have to deal with the cost of those consequences.

As a result of the cut to the special diet allowance. there will be a 1% increase in the basic needs allowance for Ontario Works and ODSP in the fall of 2010. One per cent does not allow people to keep up with the cost of rising rents, of the HST on their electricity bills or of the HST on their everyday expenses. It's a way, politically, to cover yourself and say that we haven't clawed back all the money from the special diet allowance, but it is not a contribution, an investment that will actually allow people to live with some dignity and build the platform on which many will be able to get back to work. Time after time, I talk to people who want to get to work, who find that because they aren't given any assistance to get into school, to get their kids into daycare or to pull together the supports that they need to get out of poverty and into working life, they're condemned to continue that life of

There hasn't been a medical evaluation of the special diet allowance to verify that the program wasn't meeting the objective of helping people meet their basic dietary needs. This is a political decision, not a medical decision, and not a decision based on any study of needs, of health outcomes, of health impacts. Respected health professionals have stated that the allowance is essential to meeting health needs, given the inadequacy of social assistance rates. I'd be very interested in hearing the contrary medical opinion that the government is relying on in making these cuts. Did it in fact talk to the medical community and come back with a conclusion that well, really,

people don't need to eat, or they don't need to eat that much, that they can eat much less and still be alive?

The Ontario Human Rights Tribunal recently called for an increase to the allowance, not its elimination. When the government says, "We were listening to the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, but there were problems," fair enough. There were problems. But the problems weren't that people were getting too much money and eating too well; it was that there wasn't an adequate allocation.

If you look beyond the special diet allowance—although I think that encapsulates the values of the government, a government in which those with the least political impact are going to get hungrier and sicker in the next while and those with the least political pull or leverage will be left to their own devices.

I want to look at some other things that could have been done. There were no reforms to punitive social assistance rules which trap people in poverty. For instance, asset stripping: telling people to divest themselves of all the last little bits of property that they have before they go on social assistance so that, frankly, having done all that they are left in a position, in this society, where they're defenceless, utterly dependent. Should anything go wrong, should there be a dispute with the government. they will not have any resources to fall back on. That is a huge problem. People on fixed incomes, on social assistance, who will be paying more for gas and for electricity in their apartments, especially now that the government is going forward with the sub-metering of apartmentspeople are going to find themselves in far more difficult circumstances.

0950

In terms of dealing with employment standards, making sure that people who work for a living at minimum wage get paid decently, the government has said that it will spend \$6 million over two years for more employment standards officers. Really, we need more enforcement of employment standards than that. Talk to people who have found that they have worked for days and weeks for a company where the employer never pays. They know that for the most part, they're just left on their own. They don't get the enforcement that's needed.

This budget really does reflect the values of this government. A big part of it has been written in secret; the consequences of it have not been revealed. The reality is that this government that says that it's green and concerned about climate change has cut a substantial program that would, in fact, address climate change. This government that says that it will deal with poverty has, in fact, decided to make poor people hungrier, sicker and more desperate. This budget is a budget that this Legislature must vote against.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Hillier: I don't know if it's a pleasure to speak to Bill 16 and the time allocation of it, but it's important to speak to this budget. I can't help but comment on the member from Pickering—Scarborough East as he was making his comments about how the Liberals are not sure what the new economy will look like, but they're

embracing this new economy. I guess he was referring to the new economy that the Liberals have built over the last six years in Ontario.

Maybe I should refresh his memory of what this economy looks like that the Liberals have built, and what they're continuing to build with Bill 16. As we know, a few short years ago, before the Liberals came to power, Ontario historically had been the engine of prosperity in this country. Well, under their new economy, we're a have-not province. We're collecting welfare from the rest of Confederation. When they took power, we had a huge and strong manufacturing sector that contributed to our well-being and our standard of living. Under their watch, we've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs under their new economy. Under their proposals and what they have done—we did have one of the lowest unemployment rates. We are now above average in unemployment rates with the Liberal new economy. In our forestry sector, which used to employ tens of thousands and add huge wealth to Ontario, while under their new economy in the last six years we have lost 63 mills in northern Ontario. We have lost over 45,000 jobs in forestry in northern Ontario.

For the member from Pickering-Scarborough East, if he wants to see what the Liberal new economy looks like, just look at the devastation you've done to this province and you'll see clearly what your policies are doing.

This bill, Bill 16, the budget bill, is full of secrecy, it is full of unknowns and, as the Liberals witnessed last week, they got caught in their own unknowns, as there was a schedule in there that would have transferred liability for accidents on public roadways to our municipal governments. They got caught with their pants down. They didn't even read their own budget bill. It wasn't until AMO—the Association of Municipalities of Ontario-read through the details of that schedule that the bells went off and the red flags were raised. The Liberal government defeated its own schedule in committee once they realized, once they were told—I'm not sure; did they purposely put that transfer of liability in there or was it just incompetence? I'm unsure and I don't think anybody is really clear how that got in there. Certainly, they're not admitting to anything.

But I think it's also important—they talked about the north. What else is this Liberal government doing as they've devastated northern industries? Well, they have a \$130 crumb for energy credits—tax credits—for people in northern Ontario. As they extract over \$1,000 out of each person's family income, they give a crumb back.

Interjections.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I guess that hit a nerve with the government House leader. They have a little bit of a soft spot, I guess, when the truth comes out.

We hear about this "open-doors Ontario." That's what their open-doors Ontario is: Open the door and leave, because there are no opportunities here under this Liberal government. Open the door in Ontario and what do you find? Half a million provincial regulations that this Liberal government has built up and barred the door with. That's what their open door is. Open the door and find a

mountain of regulatory obstacles that will prevent anybody and everybody from achieving any economic prosperity in this province.

The Liberals are exceptionally good at rhetorical language, the flowery phrases that make people—it sounds like they're actually concerned. Open doors and we get this new economy that has put Ontario in the caboose of Confederation for economic production. Of course, the Liberals will always say, "Well, there's a global recession." Of course, there was a global recession. But how come Saskatchewan remained a have province? How come Saskatchewan saved and regained its prosperity? Newfoundland, Alberta, BC: four provinces that were have provinces stayed as prosperous economies, and we got the Liberal new economy down the drain.

We can talk about pharmacies, forestry, the HST, but it's also important to see how this Liberal government works. We have an opposition day motion that was scheduled. It was agreed that we would debate the HST, a \$3-billion tax grab by this Liberal government. We had an agreement with them that we would debate the HST and put the HST before the people in an election. That was our opposition day motion. What does the Liberal government do once they hear what that's all about? They run for cover. We get some squawking from the back benches about nonsense, but they cancelled their programming motion. They cancelled the agreement. They have no regard. It's not just the public that they break promises to; they break promises to everybody and anybody.

There is no such thing as an oath with this Liberal government. Just go back to your Canadian Taxpayers Federation oath that you would not put in a new tax unless you consulted and had agreement from the people. Well, we know that 80% of the people are opposed to the HST. The PC Party wanted to debate the HST, bring it before the people and really show that democracy respects people. Well, that is the last thing that this Liberal government ever wants to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The time is now expired. Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 21, 2010, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. Smith has moved third reading of Bill 16, An Act to implement 2010 Budget measures and to enact or amend various Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Orders of the day.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: We have no further business, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): This House stands recessed until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1001 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I'm absolutely delighted to introduce some family members of our page Jacob Alaichi. We have with us today his mother, Laila. We also have his sister Phatima Alaichi; and brothers Raphel, Ismael and Kamal. We welcome you all here today.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I'd like to welcome the grandmother of Emma Allen, one of our pages, Betty-Ann Duncan, and her aunt Elizabeth Duncan. They're from Hanover and I think maybe her grandmother may have taught with my brother, so welcome.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm very pleased to introduce the parents of my Leeds-Grenville page, Luke Goralczyk. In the members' west gallery are his father, Alex Goralczyk, and his mother, Nancy Gray. Welcome.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm very pleased to have here in the Legislature these past few weeks a page from my riding of Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Mary McPherson. Visiting to watch Mary in her duties today in the members' west gallery are her mother, Tracy Shields; Mary's sister Sarah McPherson; and her grandfather Ken Shields. We welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: In the east gallery we have a number of distinguished guests who are here today to celebrate a special event. All the members this evening are invited at 6:30 to celebrate a very special spiritual giant of the 20th and 21st century, His Holiness Pope John Paul II. Our guests are Marek Ciesielczuk, who is the consul general of the Republic of Poland, and Mr. Chris Korwin-Kuczynski, who is a former councillor of the city of Toronto.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to introduce some guests of Guelph page Rhett Figliuzzi who are here with us today. I think this must be the grandparents on the other side of the family and I think they're up there where I can't see them. His mother, Cheryl Figliuzzi, is back, along with grandmother Gale Baldwin and greataunt Grace Beeney, Welcome.

Hon. Carol Mitchell: They haven't arrived yet but I want to introduce the students from Lakeview Christian School from Bayfield and welcome them to the Legislature and their teachers Ms. Friesen, Ms. Steiner, and Mr. Bender. Welcome when you arrive.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like to welcome to the House today Rick Strutt, who is the president of Community Living Toronto; and Sam McKail, who is here, and their annual Appetite for Awareness Day. MPPs can go to room 212a after question period for a complimentary box lunch.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On Tuesday April 27, 2010, the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Mr. Murdoch, rose on a point of order arising out of question period. The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound asked a question of the Acting Premier, who immediately re-

ferred the question to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. The supplementary was also answered by the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound attempted to file his notice of dissatisfaction to a response by the Acting Premier, and argued that her referral of his question to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure was technically a response. The member asked for some clarification on the rules and practice respecting this issue.

I had a chance to review the point of order, and I'd like to remind all members that standing order 37(e) states the following: "A minister to whom an oral question is directed may refer the question to another minister who is responsible for the subject matter to which the question relates." The Acting Premier referred the question which dealt with renewable energy and industrial wind farms to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, as the rule allows.

I also refer members to standing order 38(a): "The Speaker's rulings relating to oral questions are not debatable or subject to appeal. However, a member who is not satisfied with the response to an oral question, or who has been told that his or her question is not urgent or of public importance, may give notice orally at the end of the oral question period that he or she intends to raise the subject matter of the question on the adjournment of the House and must give written notice to the Speaker and file reasons for dissatisfaction with the Clerk before 12 noon, and the Speaker shall, not later than 4 p.m., indicate the matter or matters to be raised at the time of adjournment that day."

A notice of dissatisfaction on a question for adjournment proceedings—a late show—must be filed with the minister who responded to the question. Therefore, if the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound was not satisfied with the response the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure provided, then he would have been well within the rules to file his notice of dissatisfaction with the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

In support of this, let me make reference to the June 3, 1993 ruling given by Speaker Warner, in which he responded to a similar point of order by confirming that a notice of dissatisfaction can only be directed to the minister who responded to the question and not the minister who referred the question.

The referral of the question by the Acting Premier did not amount to a response to the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound's question. The response and supplementary by the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, however, did.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Premier: Ontario families are wondering what has happened to Dalton McGuinty after six years in office. Ontario's Ombuds-

man, André Marin, has served the public of Ontario with dignity, and your government has accepted each and every one of his recommendations for reform. Yet, Premier, you are presiding over an unseemly smear campaign to sully his reputation in an attempt to prevent his reappointment. In contrast, you have bent over backwards to appoint Liberal attack dog Patrick Dillon to his third government job in three years. Premier, what does it say about the Office of the Premier when the Liberal attack dog gets everything he wants and the Ombudsman, the watchdog for the people, gets a smear campaign?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm pleased to take the question.

With respect to Mr. Dillon, I think it is noteworthy that he was appointed by the NDP government in 1993 to the Ontario Construction Secretariat. In 1996, he was appointed by the then Ontario Conservative government to the WSIB. More recently, he was appointed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper to the Corrections Canada advisory board. Mr. Dillon began his career in the construction industry in 1961. He's the business manager and secretary-treasurer of the construction trades council. The council represents 150,000 apprentices and tradespeople, and represents 13 affiliated unions. I think his credentials speak for themselves.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: The one credential the Premier notably left out is that Patrick Dillon heads the so-called Working Families Coalition that spent some \$7 million on attack ads, helping push the Liberal Party over its spending limits for campaign advertising.

This morning, the Liberals voted to appoint Mr. Dillon to his third government agency patronage appointment that pays him up to \$500 a meeting. The groups that financed Dillon's attack ads have received some \$23 million in government grants. But what does the Ombudsman, André Marin, get for his exemplary public service? One of the dirtiest whisper campaigns in memory to sully the character of a highly effective public servant.

Premier, what does this say about the character of the Office of the Premier? Will you do the right thing? Will you apologize to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that my honourable colleague is very much aware of the statements that I've made regarding Mr. Marin and, if I dare say so, the tremendous respect I have expressed for the work that he has done in terms of ensuring that the greater public interest prevails in so many particular cases.

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I would also say, my honourable colleague says that Mr. Dillon has somehow done something unwarranted and possibly even illegal under the elections laws of Ontario. I want to draw to my colleague's attention a letter dated April 17 from Elections Ontario where it says, in part, "Our investigation did not show that the advertising was created or disseminated 'on behalf of' any registered party, candidate or association...." This—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: It is very clear that the Premier has a very cozy relationship with Patrick Dillon and the so-called Working Families Coalition. Basically, they scratch his back with a \$7-million advertising campaign that advances the Liberal Party and you scratch theirs with government patronage appointments, millions of dollars in grants and legislation to satisfy their every wish.

Premier, we know that you don't like the Ombudsman. He has been tough on you, no doubt about it, but even in your heart, you must know that this kind of smear campaign against this highly effective public servant is just plain wrong.

I ask you to do the right thing. Will you apologize for the smear campaign to the Ombudsman, and will you give Patrick Dillon the boot?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know my honourable colleague is supportive of the process to deal with the next Ombudsman, and we welcome Mr. Marin's application in that regard.

With respect to Mr. Dillon, I know that my honourable colleague, if he has such issues now with the qualifications of Mr. Dillon, might also ask why it is that his own government appointed him to an important responsibility. Why did Prime Minister Harper appoint him to an important responsibility? Why did the NDP government appoint him to an important responsibility? Again, I think his credentials speak for themselves. I think he's a man of tremendous talent and ability. There's no surprise whatsoever that all governments of all political stripes want to avail themselves of those talents and abilities.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question, as well, is to the Premier. Today, the McGuinty Liberals voted to approve the latest appointment for a senior member of the Liberals' surrogate campaign team. Patrick Dillon appeared at the government agencies committee where he was handed his third political appointment in just three years. He receives \$225 a day at the WSIB. He also receives \$550 a day at Infrastructure Ontario.

What is Dillon's price for helping the McGuinty Liberals break Ontario election laws?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd ask the honourable member to withdraw that comment, please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: For a government that decries smearing, it seems to me they're doing a pretty effective job at it right now and right here.

Again, we're talking about an individual who the official opposition has turned its attention towards, an individual who began his career in the construction industry in 1961. Along the way—again, to restate it—he's been appointed by an NDP government, by a provincial Conservative government, by a federal Conservative government and by a provincial Liberal government. If

that says anything at all, surely it speaks to an objective assessment about the talent, abilities and capacity of this particular individual. I'd ask my colleague to again ask herself, if he's so—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: With respect, Premier, this same individual ran \$7 million in anti-Progressive Conservative attack ads in the last two elections.

This morning, Dillon refused to be sworn under oath. He was as evasive as a McGuinty Liberal cabinet minister on even the most straightforward of questions. He clammed up when asked about Working Families pollster Don Guy. Obviously, we all know that Don Guy was Dalton McGuinty's former chief of staff and election campaign director, who advised Working Families on the anti-PC attack ad campaigns. They ran in both 2003 and 2007.

The question is, Premier, do you really expect Ontario families to believe you didn't know that your chief of staff and campaign director advised Working Families on how to break Ontario election laws?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I don't need any help from the government side, thank you very much.

I'd like the honourable member to withdraw the comment, please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Some of you—*Interjections*.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I want to remind you that many of you were in the chamber yesterday for a statement that I delivered, and if you weren't here, I would encourage you to read the Hansard from the end of question period yesterday. I say this all around, whether it is somebody who's asking a question or heckling that is coming from within the House as well, or somebody answering a question, remember the statement that I made yesterday. I caution all members that marring the reputation of an individual under the cover of privilege is not responsible. And I would—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No, and I say this to heckling that comes from within the House too. Smearing the reputation of an individual under the cover of privilege is not responsible and I would discourage all members from doing so.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague refuses to accept a few important facts. One is that every government of every political stripe has hired Mr. Dillon based on his capacity. Secondly, they refuse to accept the finding found in a letter dated April 17, 2009, from Elections Ontario that specifically addressed the chronic complaint of my colleagues opposite and said that it was without foundation.

It seems to me they've struck out in virtually every capacity when it comes to their complaints that they

continue to make. I would ask them to face up to reality. This man offers much to all governments of all political stripes. It is not surprising that we are all taking advantage of his talents.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: They took advantage of his talents, all right: It was \$7 million in anti-Progressive Conservative attack ads in the last two election campaigns. That's an important fact, Premier, that you often like to forget.

Let's go back to Don Guy for a moment. He has received over \$3 million in public money since helping Working Families with its ad campaign. Arrow Communications and Policomm are ad firms run by another Liberal, Marcel Wieder. Also, he has cozy ties with Working Families. You handed his firms \$2 million. Don Guy—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask the honourable member to withdraw that comment of imputing motive.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdrawn.

Why have you condoned your inner circle working with Working Families?

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Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, my honourable colleague may be setting some kind of a record here for the number of times she has called upon you to rise and intervene with virtually every statement that she makes.

I might say that families watching today might have a concern about the quality of their education, a question—

Mr. Jim Wilson: You skirted the law and you know it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Simcoe–Grey will withdraw the comment.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just remind you of my statement that I just delivered.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I would think that families watching today would have an interest in the future of their education, an interest in the quality of their health care, an interest in the strength of their economy and our capacity to create jobs, and an interest in our environment. None of those seem to be of even passing interest to the official opposition, and I think that's a loss to the people of Ontario.

PENSION PLANS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. In mid-June, Canada's finance ministers will meet to decide the future of retirement savings in this country. Last week, the McGuinty government voted unanimously against an NDP motion supporting public pensions and unanimously in favour of a Liberal bill that would mean billions more in fees that are going to be collected by banks and insurance companies. Is that the message the Premier's finance minister is going to take to the meeting

in June: that Ontario supports more ways for banks and insurance companies to skim money off of people's retirement savings?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I really do appreciate the question. I think my honourable colleague understands that her interpretation is not one that I share when it comes to what the vote represents and where we need to go.

To restate a couple of things: One, this represents a national challenge; I think it calls for a national solution. There's a real problem associated with the adequacy of retirement income levels for all Canadians, not just Ontarians.

Secondly, I think it's really important that we keep an open mind when it comes to the solutions. My honourable colleague is putting forward one particular solution which I think is important and cannot and should not be discounted. On the other hand, I think there are also some private sector opportunities. My instincts are telling me that the ultimate solution will be an amalgam of the public and the private, and I think we don't enjoy the luxury at this point in time of excluding one or the other.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier can't say it's a national issue and then support a private member's bill for an Ontario change. You can't have it both ways.

In two votes last week on diametrically opposed pension motions, it became very clear that the McGuinty government favours a fee-laden retirement savings option being pushed by the banks and insurance companies, rather than building on the successful legacy of public pensions such as the Canada pension plan.

Last week's votes are more than just a coincidence. So I'm going to ask the Premier again, is that the message that his finance minister is going to bring to meetings with other finance ministers from across the country: that the banks and insurance companies need new ways to skim fees off the retirement savings of hard-working Ontarians?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In addition to what the Premier said, I'd remind my colleague opposite that we have engaged Bob Baldwin, a noted economist, to provide indepth research to us. He has also done work in the past for the Canadian Labour Congress. I've had the opportunity to hold four public forums across Ontario that had representatives from a variety of sources interested in post-retirement income issues.

We are trying to develop as thoughtful an approach as we can to an important issue that I think affects—I think the member would agree—all members. I look forward, on behalf of the McGuinty government, to attending the finance ministers' meeting in June as we begin the evolution of our post-retirement income system to help protect all Ontarians as we—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier and his finance minister are doing the best that they can to be evasive on

this question, but last Thursday his caucus voted unanimously in favour of a bill that was lifted directly from an insurance industry proposal. His caucus did that very clearly. At the same time, that week, they opposed our Ontario retirement plan, the public plan.

Every year, \$8.4 billion in fees is already being skimmed off Canadians' retirement savings by banks and insurance companies. When the finance minister heads off to the meeting in June, will he be suggesting that the \$8.4 billion coming out of the pockets of workers and pensioners just isn't enough for those struggling insurance companies and banks?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In my 2010 budget, we outlined a variety of options available to governments across the country to the provinces, to the federal government. That member and her party have voted against that bill.

I would remind her that we have engaged a broad public consultation across Ontario, which is appropriate under the circumstances. There are a number of pillars to our post-retirement income system which provide Canadians with a range of options.

I welcome the input of the member opposite and her party to this important debate. We welcome the input of a variety of organizations. Canada has one of the most successful post-retirement income systems in the world. We're committed to making sure that we build on that success and help ensure a better future—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier as well. Independent studies indicate that the HST and the end of point-of-sale exemptions will cost Ontario First Nations families up to \$121 million a year. Why didn't the Premier, his Minister of Finance or his Minister of Aboriginal Affairs at the time consult with First Nations before signing HST agreements with the federal government?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: What is very important to recognize is that the government of Ontario stands shoulder to shoulder with First Nations in wishing to continue the point-of-sale exemption. We have signed a memorandum of understanding with Regional Chief Toulouse about that fact. The Premier has written a letter to Prime Minister Harper to continue that. In fact, we are working at every level—my colleagues Minister Duncan, Minister Wilkinson and myself—to make sure we continue that. It is a joint effort, and we will continue that for as long as it takes to continue the point-of-sale exemption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here's what the Chiefs of Ontario say about that agreement that the minister quotes from: This agreement "does not let the Ontario government off the hook for its failure to consult with and accommodate First Nations...."

The Premier had an opportunity to consult. He had an opportunity to include First Nations in point-of-sale exemptions in two agreements. He decided not to do it. Will the Premier now acknowledge and admit that his government utterly failed Ontario's First Nations?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: As I made clear, we have taken the necessary steps to work with First Nations to make sure that we present a joint, united front to get the Prime Minister and the government of Canada to continue the point-of-sale exemption on and after July 1, and we will continue those efforts.

But the relationship is evolving in a very important and positive way through the efforts of Premier McGuinty and the relationship-building that has been undertaken by my predecessor, Minister Duguid, and the great work that he has been doing, and a number of specific initiatives, such as my colleague's, Minister Gravelle's, over the development of the Mining Act.

Relationship, consultation and accommodation is happening in ways that it did not five or 10 years ago. This is an entirely new era of relationship-building for the government and the—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This government's relationship with First Nations is causing blockades across the province. Wait until you see what happens on July 1.

I was actually in Sault Ste. Marie just the other day and met with First Nations leaders, including the Union of Ontario Indians' Deputy Grand Chief Joe Hare and Batchewana Chief Dean Sayers. They're extremely worried about the negotiations with the Harper government on the point-of-sale exemptions, and they're really concerned. What they want to see is something very specific from this government. They're concerned that when the HST comes into effect on July 1, their point-of-sale exemptions will still be in place.

My question is: Will the Premier commit today to honouring First Nations' point-of-sale exemption after July 1 if the negotiations with the federal government are still ongoing?

1100

Hon. Christopher Bentley: As I made clear in my first answer, we stand shoulder to shoulder and are working every minute of every day with First Nations to make the federal government continue the point-of-sale exemption after July 1. They administer the HST; every-body knows that. But we have signed a memorandum of agreement with Regional Chief Toulouse and First Nations. We're working at all levels: the Premier, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Revenue and myself. We are going to continue that work for as long as it takes and address every issue that's necessary.

The relationship that used to exist, that was infused with centuries of unfortunate history, has completely changed. On this and so many other levels, we're working with First Nations to build a more prosperous Ontario and more prosperous First Nations communities.

APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier: I guess Ontarians are asking what has happened to you after six years in office. The way you have approached the André Marin affair and the reappointment of the Ombudsman is very disturbing to the people of Ontario, to members of this Legislature and to independent officers of this Legislature.

As you claimed yesterday in this House, you do care about Mr. Marin and the fair process, but if you really cared about Mr. Marin's reputation, why don't you do the right thing and fire those backroom Liberals who have been defaming Mr. Marin's reputation? Will you do that today, Premier, to clear up this incident?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague knows that I've had the opportunity to speak, on a number of occasions, publicly about Mr. Marin. I think the record is very clear in that regard. I've expressed a tremendous appreciation for the work that he has done and for the positive influence that he has lent to the workings of our government. I think we have struck a good partnership that serves the greater public interest, and I stand by those comments today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: We're highly suspicious on this side that one of the main reasons that the Premier wants to get rid of Mr. Marin as the Ombudsman of Ontario is that he did a rather scathing report on the LHINs. You want to not release that report. If you get rid of Mr. Marin you could put in a Liberal-backed Ombudsman, not so independent, to get rid of that report.

The media today says that you are trying to wash your hands of this incident. Rather than washing your hands of this incident, why don't you show some leadership, do a search-and-destroy mission, get rid of those people who are defaming an independent officer of this Legislature, clear up this matter and bring some integrity back to this office, to this Legislature and to the Office of the Ombudsman?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm not sure if I can state any more clearly what I've already stated.

I would encourage my honourable colleagues opposite to continue to participate in the process. It's a fair process. It's a good process. It differs, I guess, from the appointment process used in the past by the Conservatives, but we think it's important to adhere to a process.

APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

Mr. Peter Kormos: To the Premier: Ontario Ombudsman André Marin says that the Premier promised him a fair Ombudsman hiring process. Marin also says that the Premier's word is gold. Is he right?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I didn't know there was a question there.

I do want to quote, with approval, my honourable colleague, who said this not too long ago: "New Democrats are adamant that even upon the occasion of a reappointment ... notwithstanding the stellar capacity of a person who has served that role, there should be the same process," and the process is pretty clear. You advertise the position, you see who's interested in the job and you vet them. That's exactly the kind of process that we are undertaking; that's exactly the kind of process that we are pursuing. I would encourage my honourable colleague to continue to support that process.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Marin says the Premier's word is gold, but just a minute: The Liberal member of the selection committee agrees to an advertising schedule that, according to Liberal insiders and government sources, yields 50 applications. The same government sources tell us that four applicants were interviewed. Now government insiders slander and libel Mr. Marin, and the government House leader wants to scuttle—derail—the selection process with her bogus claims about improper advertising. Is that fair, or is the Premier's word nothing more than fool's gold?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There's a process. My honourable colleague wants to make representations about the process in the Legislature. I think the appropriate forum for that is actually the committee itself that's doing that work. I would encourage him to continue to work within the process and that we work together to ensure that the best result proves to be the outcome, because of

our collaborative efforts.

PHARMACISTS

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. A prominent Toronto Star journalist recently spoke out about the ridiculous campaign against this government's drug reforms. Let me quote from last week's article by Jim Coyle:

"How odd it is that the pharmacies apparently don't have" the "money to hire pharmacy students as interns this summer, but have the coin to underwrite a bash-the-government bus tour of Ontario for a posse of them.

"Word is that independent pharmacies kicked in \$1,000 to \$2,000 apiece—depending on who's telling the story—to fund a war chest that amounts to about \$5 million."

This smear campaign has deliberately targeted Liberal ridings like mine. In Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, seniors are getting voicemail drops from pharmacists, and telemarketers are hanging up on them if they voice their support for our government or are forwarding them to our—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member for her question. I was very disappointed to see that bigchain pharmacies cancelled their student placements this summer, when clearly they have millions of dollars to spend on full-page ads, radio campaigns, glossy brochures and a bus tour around the province.

These students are the future of pharmacy. They would be much—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Like your HST ads? How many billions have you spent on your HST ads?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Renfrew.

Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: These students are the future of pharmacy. They would be much better off getting that work experience, getting a head start on their careers, rather than engaging in this campaign. The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and I have sent a letter to the deans of the two pharmacy schools in Ontario expressing our concern and telling them that we are there to work with them on this issue.

Make no mistake about it: We are determined to get fair drug prices for Ontarians. Ontarians deserve—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Supplementary?

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I'm glad to see the minister is making it clear to everyone that this government will not be swayed by the latest blitz of propaganda. I certainly will continue to stand up for all Ontarians, who deserve fair drug prices.

Many of my constituents don't have the benefit of a drug plan and have to pay cash for their medications, so they're glad to hear that our government is working hard to ensure that all Ontarians have access to fair drug prices and quality pharmacy services.

However, among my constituents there seems to be ambiguity as to how far drug prices will fall as a result of our reforms. Could the minister please share with this House some of the savings that could be achieved from our drug reforms when they are implemented?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The government is taking action to get fair drug prices for Ontarians, and we will not back down. We will work on behalf of Ontarians. We will ensure that people pay a fair price for the drugs they need.

Let me give you some examples. Someone who pays out of pocket for simvastatin, a drug for high cholesterol, will likely save over \$300 a year. A person paying out of pocket for metformin, a common diabetes drug, would save over \$100 a year. If they are taking pioglitazone, another diabetes drug, they would save almost \$8,000 a year.

People with drug plans would see either lower premiums or more services or both, and taxpayers will be getting better value for their precious, hard-earned taxpayer dollars.

This is the right thing to do for all Ontarians. I do not understand why the opposition—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

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GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is again for the Premier. Patrick Dillon refused to answer even the most simple questions about the relationship between Working

Families and Marcel Wieder. When I asked if Marcel Wieder and your former chief of staff Don Guy met to create anti-PC attack ads for Working Families, Dillon refused to answer. There are no minutes for meetings that senior McGuinty Liberal cabinet ministers had with Working Families in their ministerial boardrooms.

If you have nothing to hide, why will no one talk about what your campaign team and Working Families discussed in the months leading up to the 2007 provincial election?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I can't, frankly, understand the obsessive focus on Mr. Dillon, a man who has been appointed twice now by provincial and federal Conservative governments. I'll take this opportunity to impress upon my honourable colleagues opposite our need for their support in our efforts to reduce drug costs for Ontario families.

I know of their alliance with big-box pharmacy in the province of Ontario. We choose to side with Ontario families. We think it's important to stand up for our families. We think it's important to stand up for Ontario taxpayers. We're all paying for our drugs, either out of pocket, as taxpayers, or through drug plans at our place of work. We can come together and reduce drug costs for families. I think that's the right thing to do and I invite them to join us.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The Premier has a chance right now to stand up for Ontario families. There are two key facts he must be aware of: Working Families added \$7 million in advertising costs in the last two election campaigns; in addition to that, \$29 million of public money has gone to Working Families contributors and their ad firms.

So I have a question for you Premier: Since Patrick Dillon refused to speak under oath at the government agencies committee this morning, and so did the McGuinty Liberals, will you agree to appear before the legislative committee to tell the story so that Ontarians will know where their taxpayer dollars are going and why this group, Working Families, is spending \$7 million in anti-PC attack ads?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, on behalf of Ontario families, I'll remind my honourable colleague that today one of the most common antibiotics for children is called amoxicillin. We're going to cut the cost of that from \$10.25 to \$5.13.

One of the fastest-growing illnesses in Ontario today is diabetes. Metformin treats diabetes. Today, the cost is \$177; we're going to reduce that cost to \$107.

Birth control pills—important to our daughters. Aviane 21—today it costs \$123; we want to reduce that to \$82. These are important practical measures to improve quality of life for Ontario families by getting their drug costs down. This is something of real and meaningful value to our families in this question period today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I will again remind the House of a ruling of Speaker Milliken in 2003: "Speakers discourage members of

Parliament from using names in speeches if they are speaking ill of some other person because, with parliamentary privilege applying to what they say, anything that is damaging to the reputation or to the individual ... is then liable to be published with the cover of parliamentary privilege and the person is unable"—I repeat, the person is unable—"to bring any action in respect of those claims."

I say this to all members of the House: Please keep in mind the words of Speaker Milliken and let's not degrade this chamber.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. Last week, I questioned the Minister of Labour about sending injured workers to an unaccredited career college as part of the WSIB's labour market re-entry scheme. The minister's response was inadequate, so I asked for a late show where the minister's parliamentary assistant gave even more inadequate answers.

This is a vital issue. I looked at just four examples of such private career colleges in Ontario: Grade Expectations, Summit Learning, Career Essentials and Niagara Retraining Facility. Among them, they have 109 colleges in Ontario that train injured workers; 94 of them are unaccredited.

The question and answer are very simple: Will the Premier direct the Minister of Labour to put an immediate stop to the practice of sending injured workers in the labour market re-entry program to unaccredited career colleges?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. John Milloy: I'm happy to talk about the strides that we made in terms of private career colleges and the important work we're doing with the Ministry of Labour. I'd like to remind the member that moving forward, the WSIB has indicated that it will only use private career colleges that are registered under the Private Career Colleges Act and are in good standing with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

I'd remind members of the work that has taken place in our government in terms of private career colleges. For the first time in 30 years, our government has transformed the way in which we regulate private career colleges. If a PCC, a private career college, is found to be in non-compliance of the act, we will take the necessary steps to shut them down. I think members are aware, from debate and discussion in here, that we've recently introduced fines for PCCs operating illegally. Fines can range now from \$250 to \$1,000 per day—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: Here's one for the books, Minister: Last week, the Minister of Labour suggested that the new president of the WSIB is on the case; he's investigating the use of unaccredited career colleges. But we actually heard from some of the injured workers contacted

through this investigation that the WSIB investigator is employed in the WSIB public relations department, and is using Facebook to contact injured workers. Is using WSIB public relations staff to crawl through Facebook friends what the minister and the new WSIB president call an investigation into the scandalous use of unaccredited career colleges for the labour market re-entry?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I'd remind the member of the important work that's going on with the Ministry of Labour and the decision that was made by the WSIB that they will only use private career colleges, moving forward, that are registered under the Private Career Colleges Act and are in good standing with our ministry. In the meantime, some programs are still under way in other schools and as the WSIB doesn't want to disrupt the courses that students are taking, we are allowing them to finish their courses—or the WSIB is—but they've ensured that none of these schools are operating illegally.

Once again, I'm very proud to report to the House the measures that we have taken to strengthen private career colleges. I had an opportunity to recently speak to their annual meeting, and the private career colleges are grateful for the strides we have taken because they recognize that bad apples hurt them all. We have taken the necessary—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Glen R. Murray: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Today is Community Living Toronto's Appetite for Awareness Day. For years, Community Living Toronto has been a source of support for thousands of individuals with an intellectual disability, searching for accessible and meaningful ways to live in the community. Whether it's living alone or with a roommate, working in a supported environment or participating in community activities, Community Living Toronto is there to help individuals realize their full potential. Could the minister discuss how this government has worked with Community Living Toronto in order to support those who need our help the most?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'd like to thank the member from Toronto Centre for this very important question. I'm so happy that Community Living Toronto is here again this year for their sixth annual Appetite for Awareness Day. I encourage all MPPs to take the time, after question period, to stop by Community Living Toronto's box lunch event in room 228.

Community Living Toronto provides a wide range of services to adults and children with developmental disabilities, everything from residential care in group homes to specialized community-based support. Because of their work, individuals with developmental disabilities are actively participating in their communities, schools and workplaces. Today is a great opportunity to congratulate everyone who works so hard in this field.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: In the neighbourhoods I have the honour of representing, Community Living Toronto is integral to many families and individuals throughout my community. Thanks to the assistance of 1,200 staff and nearly 1,000 volunteers, individuals across Toronto are able to develop the skills that they need to live and thrive in this community. I understand this government has strongly supported Community Living Toronto since 2003.

Could you tell the Legislature what support the government has provided and continues to provide to that great organization, Community Living Toronto?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you for the question. Our government is committed to supporting the developmental services sector. Last year, my ministry provided over \$51 million in annualized funding to Community Living Toronto. Our government also provided them with almost \$560,000 in annualized—

Interjection

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, withdraw the comment.

Mr. Paul Miller: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Since 2003, we have increased funding to these agencies by 43%. Today, Community Living Toronto—and I want to welcome the president of Community Living Toronto here, Mr. Strutt—is the largest ministry-funded developmental services agency in Toronto and serves over 5,000 persons with developmental disabilities throughout the city.

We have a great working relationship with Community Living Toronto, and I look forward to continuing to work with them. Again, I'd like to thank them for everything they do and—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, Premier, representatives of hard-working convenience store owners were here to warn you that adding 8% HST on legal cigarettes is, in their words, "adding gasoline to the fire" that is the illegal tobacco trade, with its 50%-plus market share. It's going to accelerate the number of convenience store closings in Ontario, now at 2,400 in the last two years. This is clear cause and effect. These small business owners are offering a revenue-neutral solution to the mess you've created. Will you give it to them?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Revenue. Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank the member for the question.

First of all, we have to remember what the problem is in contraband tobacco. It is a question, and I agree with Michael Perley, of supply and demand. What we're doing in our ministry is being very clear that this is a problem that is unacceptable to the people of Ontario.

I say to the member that over the last two years, our convictions have tripled, our seizures are going up 50% year over year, and our penalties assessed now reach in excess of \$14 million, because we are working closely with law enforcement to make sure that the laws of this province are being respected.

I do quote Mr. Perley, who has been a great advisor to this government in regard to a smoke-free Ontario. He says that the contraband cigarette problem is a problem of supply and distribution, not of higher taxes. I'd be interested to know from the member whether they believe we should have cheaper smokes and more expensive generic drugs in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Minister, what are you smoking and can I have some?

The problem is so out of control, 32% of butts sampled outside the Department of Finance in Ottawa were illegal themselves, and that's a government building.

As Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair told me last week, the profits from illegal tobacco go directly to buy the guns and the drugs on our streets. Minister, put HST on legal cigarettes and you're putting money in the pocket of organized crime. It kills small business and it buys the guns that kill innocent people.

Will you hold the line on taxes on cigarettes on July 1, yes or no?

Hon. John Wilkinson: Let's be clear: I reject advice from the members opposite who believe that in this province what we should be doing is cutting the taxes on a product that kills people. Instead, I believe that our government is doing the right thing by reducing the price of drugs that actually save people's lives. I can't think of an issue in the province of Ontario today where there is such a clear division between what your party stands for and what we stand for on this side of the House. There are compounds that save people's lives and the price of those are going down, and we will not take advice from you in regard to the fact that you believe that we should be reducing the price.

What I find interesting is that your colleague the member from Parry Sound said, "I think we can learn a lot from Quebec." I might add that in their last budget, Quebec announced a sales tax increase and a corresponding increase to the tobacco tax. So you might want to talk to Norm Miller about your position.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. While patients at Ottawa hospitals are being warned they may be losing more front-line health care staff, the CEO of the Ottawa Hospital has seen his salary double in the last eight years. Under a compensation scheme that was introduced by the Premier and that he wants to see replicated all across the province, this kind of thing is going to happen again. If it didn't work in Ottawa, why

does the Premier think it's going to work in the rest of the province?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I look forward to hearing more about what is behind this question. I'm a bit puzzled, I confess, about the question.

We have introduced legislation that will tie CEO compensation and the compensation of other leadership in the hospital to achieving benchmarks when it comes to quality of care. We know that we can always improve the quality of care in our hospitals, and I'm delighted to have the support of the Ontario Hospital Association, the Ontario Medical Association and the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario as we work to improve the quality of care in our hospitals.

Will hospital CEOs have to show that continuous improvement to earn their salary? Yes, they will. It's the right thing to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Patients are angry when they see front-line services vanish while executive pay continues to rise.

Last week, the health minister said that all of us who are paid by taxpayers need "to take a bit of a pause when it comes to increases in our compensation."

Later this week, the House is going to be debating my bill that caps public sector executive salaries at twice the Premier's pay. My question is this: Can I and the people of Ontario, the patients of this province, count on the Premier's support in this regard?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'd like to take the opportunity to talk about things that really matter to patients when it comes to health care. They care about getting wait times down.

At the Ottawa Hospital, they've been able to bring down the wait times for hip replacement surgery by 67 days; knees down 153—that's half a year; cataract surgeries down 236 days; cancer surgery down 53 days; and MRI procedures down 285 days.

Things are working when it comes to getting wait times down for people in this province, including at the Ottawa Hospital.

We've made some important investments in the Champlain LHIN, in Ottawa. One that I'm very proud of is our nursing graduate guarantee. Six hundred and ninety-two—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I have a question for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. May 18 is International Museum Day, a day that has been celebrated around the world since 1977. It recognizes the important contributions that museums, art galleries and heritage sites make to communities across the province and around the globe.

Today and throughout this month of May, Ontario museums are featuring hundreds of exhibits and events to showcase our diverse history and innovative future.

Days like today are important because they help us appreciate the important role museums play in our communities. They help us discover who we are and what brings us together.

Minister, what is the government doing to support Ontario's museums so that they can promote and show-case our rich history and heritage?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member from Davenport.

It gives me great pleasure to speak about museums on International Museum Day. Museums play a critical role in our everyday lives. It's a place where children can learn, families can connect and adults can engage. Museums are educational institutions that open windows for us to look back on to our past and to envision our future. This is why our government is proud of our investments.

Since 2003, we have invested over \$232 million in museums and organizations across the province. Museums are treasures of this society, and we are committed to protecting and supporting them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Mr. Speaker-

Hon. John Gerretsen: That's a great museum tie.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: How did you know it's a museum tie? You're right: This is my museum tie.

The motto for International Museum Day is: "Museums are an important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of cultures and development of mutual understanding, cooperation and peace among peoples." This speaks to the role that museums play in our lives.

Some have said that no trip to Toronto is complete without a visit to the Royal Ontario Museum, and I cannot agree more. With its recent architectural transformation and six million pieces in its collection, there is something new to discover around every corner.

In addition to being great cultural institutions, museums are also great tourism attractions. People from around the world travel to Toronto to see the unique exhibits held at the ROM.

Minister, what are you doing to ensure that local museums such as the ROM are competitive—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the question.

Museums are much more than just educational institutions; they are experiences that we can share with our friends and family.

For the ROM to remain competitive, it must keep up with technology. This is why our government has invested \$178 million to assist with the transformation of the ROM. The ROM is working on a project to allow visitors to personalize their tours online. This will enhance the visitors' experience. Happy visitors are more likely to return. But more importantly, they will tell their

friends and relatives, and this will help attract visitors and stimulate our local economy.

INFRASTRUCTURE HEALTH AND SAFETY ASSOCIATION

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Premier. Premier, there seems to be some confusion as to who is in charge of your new Infrastructure Health and Safety Association. On March 26, in a public meeting with stakeholders, the CEO of the IHSA, Michael Delisle, shed some light on that confusion. He said that he was having "a separate, private meeting with Pat Dillon to work out the slate of labour representatives."

Premier, why is the head of the Working Families Coalition deciding who represents labour in your government agency?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: He's not.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: That answer reminds me of that sage advice from Mark Twain: When in doubt, tell the truth.

In that-

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Withdraw the comment, please.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Withdrawn.

In that public meeting on March 26, there was one union present which did not donate to the Working Families Coalition, and that was the Christian Labour Association of Canada, which represents more than 10,000 workers in Ontario. At the public meeting, they asked Michael Delisle if they could participate in that meeting, where your hand-picked CEO had already confirmed that he and Pat Dillon were working out the slate of labour representatives. His response to that query was: "That's not going to happen."

Minister, why are Pat Dillon and the Working Families Coalition dictating policies at government agencies?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, they're not.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question. The member from Beaches—East York.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. *Interjections*.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Start the clock.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: "Tea Party" Tim, how're you doing?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

My comments, as I said earlier, are directed to all members of this House.

POVERTY

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. This morning, the Minister of Children and Youth Services, the member from Haldimand—Norfolk and I had the privilege of addressing a large group of anti-poverty activists from across Ontario. The minister spoke about commitment, she spoke about co-operation, she spoke about sharing a vision, but she stopped short of admitting that affordable housing waiting lists, food bank lines and poverty rates are getting worse, not better. She then dropped the bombshell: She admitted that the social assistance advisory council has presented its report to the government. Why hasn't the minister tabled this much-anticipated document with the House?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I am very pleased to say that this morning, I had a chance to speak to 25 in 5 about the important partnership that we have with organizations across the province to reduce poverty by 25% in five years—90,000 kids to be out of poverty. It is with great respect for the work that they do and continue to do that we come to them in partnership to seek their advice, to work collectively, to determine what the next steps might be as we continue to tackle these important issues.

I had the opportunity to highlight to them where we were in the upcoming time period, and we do know that we've asked an incredible group to come and provide thoughtful advice to the government with respect to the social assistance review. We've had a chance to receive some preliminary information with respect to that ongoing report, and when the process completes itself and the documents are translated, I do know that these—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently to what the minister had to say, and by the lack of applause from her own colleagues, it's quite obvious to me—

Applause.

Mr. Michael Prue: Okay, go ahead.

It's quite obvious to me that she has no intention of filing this report until after this Legislature is no longer sitting, sometime in June. The minister as much as apologized this morning for this government's wrongheaded and cruel elimination of the special diet allowance; again, she stopped short of promising to reinstate it. The minister also didn't mention that for the first time since 2006, social assistance rate increases have fallen below the rate of inflation.

My question again: Is this government keeping the contents of the advisory council's report a secret until after this House ceases because they are afraid of what it says?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Absolutely not, and I am prepared to compare our record to theirs any day, my friend, any day: some \$63.5 million in long-term funding to child care to help families in this province, and you voted against it; all-day JK and SK for Ontario kids to help lift those families out of poverty, and you voted against it. We are working with families to ensure that every year, those families and those working mothers have the Ontario child benefit so that they can lift themselves and their families out of poverty, and the members opposite voted against it.

We're not scared of these issues. We've made a written commitment. We are tackling this issue publicly

and in partnership with our friends and colleagues and also with those who might bring criticism to us. We look—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members will come to order, please.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Tim, I just want to know if you write on your hand.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Economic Development, you can have that conversation out in the hallway with the honourable member.

Hon. James J. Bradley: She can go out for tea.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): And the Minister of Municipal Affairs can join her.

TAXATION

Mr. Bruce Crozier: My question is to the Minister of Revenue. Minister, small businesses play an important role in my riding and in ridings all across this province. Jack Mintz, the economics chair at the University of Calgary, estimates that our comprehensive tax package will create 591,000 jobs, \$47 billion in new investment and increase work wages. The president of the Canadian Auto Workers' union, Ken Lewenza, has said, "We are arguing about elements of the harmonized sales tax, but brothers and sisters, don't buy into this tax rage...."

Michael Oliphant from the Daily Bread Food Bank has said, "In terms of the net impact on sales tax harmonization, we think that overall it will actually improve the incomes of low-income Ontarians." Who can Ontarians trust? Can they trust—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank the member for the question and having me to his riding.

In particular, I want to share with the House that yesterday I was invited by our colleague the member for Oakville to visit a company called Entripy. Entripy is an amazing company started by a young man when he was still at the University of Toronto. Today in Oakville, after 11 years, they have 25 people there. I had an opportunity to visit that company, and the press then asked him that question: "These savings—what does that amount to for your small business?" He said, "Between \$15,000 and \$20,000 a year." The media then asked him, "What are you going to do with that money?" He said, "Hire more people."

That's what our tax reform package is all about. I want to say to Jas Brar and the good people at Entripy that they understand that the nature of our tax reform is one that lowers the cost of business, which allows them to be more competitive. He has a vision now of not only serving Canada but also the US market—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise on a point of order regarding order paper questions. According to standing order 99(d),

"The minister shall answer such written questions within 24 sessional days, unless he or she indicates that more time is required because the answer will be costly or time consuming or that he or she declines to answer, in which case a notation shall be made on the Orders and Notices paper following the question indicating that the minister has made an interim answer, the approximate date that the information will be available, or that the minister has declined to answer, as the case may be."

While this may not be important for some people, it is very important to the constituents of Dufferin—Caledon. As you know, you had to remind a number of ministers last week that my order paper questions were now due, and I would ask for your advice on what I can do to ensure that they actually get answered.

I have submitted order paper questions two subsequent times and, in both cases, the replies have been standard ministerial press release quotes with no reference to my specific question.

I do not understand why I was late in receiving responses when it was obvious, by the lack of answers, that the ministers did not spend any time answering the questions I asked. In fact, for some questions the same answer was cut and pasted as a reply to other questions. Now I have lost 24 sessional days, in fact almost two months, waiting to receive answers to questions that are important to my constituents.

I believe that my privileges as a member of this House have been violated, and I ask that you review the answers provided—I have copies of all the order paper questions I'm referencing—and that you offer your advice on how I can assist my constituents with actually getting answers to the order paper questions submitted. If I could have a page, I'll give that to the Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the honourable member for her point of order. The point she raises is not a new one, and I will make some quotations in a few moments.

I'd just like to say to the member that numerous Speakers have ruled that during oral question period ministers may answer a question any way they see fit. It's also the case that it is not the Speaker's responsibility to ensure that the answer to a written question satisfies that question.

This is further supported by O'Brien and Bosc on page 522 where it says—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. It's important to all members.

"There are no provisions in the rules for the Speaker to review government responses to questions."

I'd say as an addendum that it is not a new issue, and I'm going to tell you why: because certainly it's an issue that opposition parties have been concerned with since at least 1935. Speaker Hipel, a former Speaker in this chamber: "I have quoted May very fully to show that this whole matter of the reply to questions is within the jurisdiction of the ministers of the crown, that it is optional with them as to whether and how they shall answer the

questions addressed to them and that the answers they do give are final subject to the their own consent to give additional information."

I would say, though, that I would implore all ministers, when answering questions, to endeavour as much as possible. Let's break the public's feeling of this place and remind and demonstrate to the public that this is truly question period and that an important part of question period is answering questions. I would say as well that an important part of a written question is an in-depth answer to that written question, because as members we all want to do the best job we can to assist our constituents.

Thank you for the point of order.

UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

Mr. Peter Kormos: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: We agree with the proposition that when the Speaker determines that offensive or disorderly language has been used, the member will be requested to withdraw the unparliamentary word or phrase and that the member must rise in his or her place to retract the words unequivocally.

The Speaker has been particularly vigilant about addressing unparliamentary, offensive or disorderly language. The difficulty that we have, though, is that the Speaker, and for reasons I think I might understand, has not stated what language, what word or what phrase is unparliamentary. What that does from time to time is leave the person who's asked to withdraw in confusion about what specifically they're withdrawing. Second, it eliminates the instructive quality or aspect of Speaker's rulings in this regard.

Look, I understand that there's a dilemma because, on the one hand, you have unparliamentary language that's on the record, and you have unparliamentary language which everybody would agree is unparliamentary. For instance, if somebody were to address me by a reference to a body part, that would probably be unparliamentary. I may not necessarily be offended, but it would probably be unparliamentary. If it were on the record, it's there, it's too late. If it weren't on the record—for instance, an interjection—the Speaker might be loath to put it on the record by virtue of drawing attention to it. But at the same time, the confusion around what people are being called upon to withdraw prevails.

So I'm asking you Speaker—and I don't know the views of other members of the House—if you could help us—seriously, help us—to identify what words are being deemed unparliamentary, offensive or disorderly, not just for the sake of the person who is being called upon to withdraw them but also for, I suppose, the educational function that those rulings ought to have when they're made here in the chamber.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the honourable member from Welland.

I would say that there is no definitive list that the Speaker works from for what is unparliamentary. As I have said on previous occasions in here, often it is the context in which a word is used. Some may deem it to be unparliamentary, but in the context that it's used I may find that it is parliamentary. By and large, I'm quite certain that when I ask a member to withdraw language that is unparliamentary, they understand why I'm asking them to do that. I will not, in my tenure as Speaker, be repeating what is unparliamentary. I will reserve that ability, that judgment, as my call as to what is unparliamentary. You may agree with me or you may disagree with me.

For myself, an important thing when a comment is made is, does it cause disorder within the House? My goal is to endeavour to do what I can to maintain order in the House. I am also conscious of the tone and the content of what is actually said.

I'm not going to repeat what I deem to be an offensive term. I come back to all members in the House that it does us all a disservice when unparliamentary language is used. We are working in the most unique work environment, and we are being closely watched by individuals.

I do thank the honourable member. I'd just ask that all members be conscious of the language they use, and I will be endeavouring, to the best of my ability, to enforce that.

DEFERRED VOTES

CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR JOBS AND GROWTH ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 POSANT LES FONDATIONS DE L'EMPLOI ET DE LA CROISSANCE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 16, An Act to implement 2010 Budget measures and to enact or amend various Acts / Projet de loi 16, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2010 et édictant ou modifiant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1150 to 1155.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith has moved third reading of Bill 16. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia Albanese, Laura Arthurs, Wayne Bartolucci, Rick Bentley, Christopher Best, Margarett Bradley, James J. Broten, Laurel C. Brown, Michael A. Brownell, Jim Cansfield, Donna H. Caplan, David Carroll, Aileen Chan, Michael Flynn, Kevin Daniel Gerretsen, John Gravelle, Michael Hoskins, Eric Hoy, Pat Jaczek, Helena Jeffrey, Linda Johnson, Rick Kwinter, Monte Lalonde, Jean-Marc Leal, Jeff Levac, Dave Mangat, Amrit Matthews, Deborah

Mitchell, Carol Moridi, Reza Murray, Glen R. Orazietti, David Phillips, Gerry Pupatello, Sandra Qaadri, Shafiq Ramal, Khalii Ramsay, David Rinaldi, Lou Ruprecht, Tony Sandals, Liz Smith, Monique Sousa. Charles Colle, Mike Crozier, Bruce Delaney, Bob Dickson, Joe Duguid, Brad Duncan, Dwight Mauro, Bill McGuinty, Dalton McMeekin, Ted McNeely, Phil Meilleur, Madeleine Milloy, John

Takhar, Harinder S. Van Bommel, Maria Wilkinson, John Wynne, Kathleen O. Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those opposed?

Navs

Arnott, Ted Bailey, Robert Chudleigh, Ted Clark, Steve DiNovo, Cheri Dunlop, Garfield Elliott, Christine Gélinas, France Hampton, Howard Hardeman, Ernie Hillier, Randy Horwath, Andrea Hudak, Tim Jones, Sylvia Klees, Frank Kormos, Peter MacLeod, Lisa Marchese, Rosario Martiniuk, Gerry Miller, Norm Miller, Paul Munro, Julia

Murdoch, Bill O'Toole, John Ouellette, Jerry J. Prue, Michael Savoline, Joyce Tabuns, Peter Wilson, Jim Witmer, Elizabeth Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 59; the nays are 31.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 71(b), the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has notified the Clerk of his intention to file notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 68, An Act to promote Ontario as open for business by amending or repealing certain Acts. The order for second reading of Bill 68 may therefore not be called today.

NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Premier concerning the IHSA. This matter will be debated at 6 p.m. today.

Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nepean-Carleton has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Premier concerning an appearance before the government agencies committee. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1200 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'm sure everyone knows that today is Ontario environment industry day here at

Queen's Park. All of the water tech companies and other clean tech companies from around the province are here to meet with us today. I'm very pleased to say that today we have with us Alex Gill, the executive director, and Bob Redhead, who's the chair of ONEIA and the executive director of government affairs of Newalta. We also have with us Tom Heintzman, the chair of environment industry day and president of Bullfrog.

I would just like to remind all the members that there is a reception tonight at 5 o'clock in the legislative dining room so that we can all meet the fantastic leaders in the environment industry that we have in the province of

Ontario.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: On a point of order, Speaker: I would like to correct the record. In response to a question from the member from Beaches-East York, I incorrectly stated that the NDP voted against full-day learning when, in fact, they voted for it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. That is

a point of order.

I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale and page Jacob Alaichi, to welcome his aunt Jamili Sleiman; his uncles Mohamad, Kamal and Ahmad Alaichi; and uncles Mahmood and Zein Oleiche to the public galleries today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS

Mr. John O'Toole: It's my pleasure and privilege to congratulate 135 of my Durham riding residents who were recently honoured with Ontario Volunteer Service Awards.

In particular, I'd like to recognize two volunteers from my riding who have 60 years of service with their organizations serving their community. They are Edna Meyers of the Bethesda-Reach Women's Institute and Roy Fleming of the Union Rod and Gun Club. Also recognized for 50 years with the Syberian Society of Canada was Czester Borek. For 40 years, recipients from the Durham riding include Paul Young of the Union Rod and Gun Club and Louis Lalande of the Knights of Columbus, Council 8549.

It was my privilege to attend both evening awards ceremonies in Durham on April 26 and 27 and to meet so many outstanding citizens from across Durham and indeed Ontario. Whether you were a volunteer for five years, 50 years or even more, you have made a positive contribution to the quality of life and lives of others by helping to build a stronger community and a stronger Ontario.

I'd also like to recognize the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and honestly to respect the members of the staff at the Honours and Awards Secretariat for an outstanding job. Thank you as well for serving our community and our province.

CYCLING SAFETY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Speaking of the environment, today we will be tabling a three-foot passing law for bicyclists in Ontario—five feet on the highway, three feet in the city. We were supported in this by cyclists across Ontario. It got a lot of media attention, and I would really call on the government, in light of the fact that each day 80 people, mostly youth and children, visit an Ontario emergency ward due to a cycling injury, and cyclists are seven to 70 times more likely to be injured than those who drive cars. Cyclists in North America are twice as likely to be killed and eight times more likely to be seriously injured than cyclists in Germany, a place that has this law in effect, as do 16 states in the United States. So we're not leaders on this file; we are following a far distant second.

This is the first time in Canada that this bill will be proposed and I would ask this government, particularly the transportation minister, to rise above partisan differences and to actually for once do the right thing: Pass this law. In so doing, you'll be saving lives from here on in, and certainly you'll be speaking to the environment, because, as we know, cycling is not only a safety issue, it's also an environmental issue. We want to make it safe on our streets for cyclists because we want to make our environment safe for the children, the adults, and the seniors who breathe it. I will be delighted to bring that in. On behalf of all Ontarians, I would ask the government to do the right thing and pass it.

WOMEN'S MULTICULTURAL RESOURCE AND COUNSELLING CENTRE OF DURHAM

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: This past Saturday evening, I had the pleasure of attending a masquerade ball hosted by the Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre of Durham. The event, Quest for a New Home, was hosted by the executive director, Esther Enyolu, and board chair Marilyn Oladiemeji of the WMRCC. This event was held to raise money as they've outgrown their modest space and need a new home to continue supporting women, children and youth throughout Durham region.

This not-for-profit charitable community organization was founded in 1993 to provide services and to increase public awareness of the rising incidence of women assaults in our community. WMRCC of Durham reaches out to immigrant and refugee women, women from diverse cultural, racial and religious backgrounds. Here are just a few examples of the many types of assistance they provide: referrals to shelters, crisis intervention, support groups for women and children, health promotion and education, skills development and training, youth counselling and programs, public education and awareness campaigns.

I was pleased to be in the company of my colleague Joe Dickson, the member from the riding of AjaxPickering, regional chair Roger Anderson, the mayors of Pickering and Ajax, and the many community leaders in both public service and the private sector.

I'd like to take this opportunity to warmly congratulate the Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre of Durham for their dedication and hard work and to sincerely thank the many sponsors and supporters of this very worthy event.

PARAMEDIC SERVICES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: On Thursday, May 20, the Kinsmen Club of Orangeville is holding a special event to honour the outstanding work of the paramedics of Dufferin County Ambulance Service. Dufferin County Ambulance Service works closely with the emergency services committee at Headwaters Health Care Centre and the Cambridge base hospital paramedic program. This unique relationship with the hospital ensures the patients are transferred seamlessly into the emergency department.

Currently, more than 70% of our full-time paramedics are certified at the advanced care level. Advanced care paramedics are highly trained and skilled pre-hospital emergency care providers. Advanced care paramedics perform complex patient assessments and make critical emergency care decisions in a fast-paced environment. This training allows our paramedics to make life-saving assessments including, in consultation with physicians, special bypass transfers to South Lake Regional Health Centre for cardiac care and Trillium Health Centre for strokes.

The Dufferin County Ambulance Service has been rated as one of the best in the province by a provincial review team. Three ambulance stations in Orangeville, Shelburne and Grand Valley have allowed our paramedics to have good response times throughout Dufferin.

Under the leadership of ambulance manager Tom Reid, Dufferin paramedics provide outstanding care to the residents of Dufferin. I would like to thank them for their dedication and commitment to our community.

1510

TRILLIUM HEALTH CENTRE

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: It's a pleasure to rise in the House and share with you the day that I spent at the Trillium Health Centre-Queensway Site in Toronto west with Take your MPP to Work with the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario.

Ruby Brown, the executive VP and the CEO; Susan Bisaillon, the executive director of clinical operations; Cathy Dibert, director of nursing; and Doris Mohrhardt, director of communication, were the individuals who took us around to show us exactly what was happening at this very unique ambulatory centre where over 36,000 operations take place every year; where they look at the individual from a holistic perspective; where they

integrate their services, both for seniors and for those who are coming in and out throughout the day. It's really unique in that there are windows, there's sunshine, there's openness, and patients have the ability to communicate with each other as they're going through things such as kidney dialysis.

Trillium is a good example of the care and compassion that the nurses have. I think my constituency is very fortunate. Although we don't have a hospital in the constituency, Trillium is the closest to us and is used consistently by many members of my community.

Again, thank you and a tribute to the nurses in Ontario for their care, their compassion and the work they do on behalf of all Ontarians, but in particular, obviously, mine in the west Toronto area.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Ted Arnott: The 2010 budget was tabled in this House two months ago. Buried within the budget papers document, released on March 25, was a so-called plan to balance the budget by 2018. This means that if the plan is truthful and is followed, for the next eight years the provincial government will continue digging the debt hole even deeper. To place this in context, people need to know that, having taken office in 2003, the profligate McGuinty Liberals will have doubled the provincial debt by 2012-13.

Now, having ignored prudent warnings to keep the lid on their spending, they say they can balance the budget if we will just trust them and be patient. Trust and patience? These virtues are in short supply when it comes to this government, and with good reason. When you look at the details of the budget papers, you see that their balanced budget plan is predicated on the government keeping overall spending increases below 2% a year. Considering the fact that the McGuinty government's spending increases have averaged more than 7% a year during their time in office, one must question the integrity of their numbers.

While there is a legislative requirement that the Auditor General express an opinion of the accuracy and veracity of the government's budget just before a provincial election, I believe we need an objective assessment of all of the government's key budgetary documents and financial reports in the years between elections, undertaken by the Auditor General or another independent and qualified professional.

If the government is playing games with the numbers in the budget, the taxpayers of Ontario need to know the truth.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Bill Mauro: Very recently there was more great news for my riding of Thunder Bay-Atikokan. In the early part of May, the Toronto Transit Commission exercised an option for an additional 126 subway cars to be constructed by Bombardier, with a lot of that work to happen in the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay-Atikokan—the Red Rocket, as it's called.

Constituents in Thunder Bay will remember that in December 2006, the original contract was announced, calling for 234 cars. The original value of that contract was somewhere in the order of magnitude of \$700 million. The option for 126 cars is worth another \$300 million or so, bringing the total value of the contract to approximately \$1 billion. There are approximately 800 people working at that plant currently, and obviously this work is going to add to that and extend the time of the employees at that plant.

This is not the \$1.2-billion contract we announced last year. You will remember that our government put in \$400 million to that contract—unbudgeted dollars, I might add. Unfortunately, there was no federal government support for that particular contract, but the one I'm here talking about today is \$1 billion, not the \$1.2 billion that we announced last year. It's some tremendous news for the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay.

From 1994 to 2003, there were zero dollars spent on mass transit in the province of Ontario. Our government has invested well over \$9 billion. The plant in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan is now well positioned into the future.

ENVIRONMENT INDUSTRY

Mr. Phil McNeely: Today is the 10th annual environment industry day at Queen's Park, sponsored by the Ontario Environment Industry Association, or ONEIA.

Over the last decade we've seen incredible growth in this vital sector, made up of over 2,600 companies across the province, employing over 60,000 people, and producing \$8 billion in revenues each year.

Ontario's environmental companies are powering innovation, keeping us competitive in the global market-place and, above all, safeguarding the environment with their products, technologies and services.

We want to help them keep growing. Our five-year Open Ontario plan is guiding our efforts. Our government is committed to making Ontario a global leader in clean industry, and we're engaged in a broad range of initiatives supporting this commitment, from our landmark Green Energy and Green Economy Act to the Toxics Reduction Act to our proposal to introduce a new Water Opportunities Act.

To echo the Minister of the Environment, I encourage all members to stop in and meet with ONEIA members in the legislative dining room today at 5 p.m.

I want to thank ONEIA and its members for all their efforts. Let's continue working together to build a clean, sustainable and prosperous future in Ontario.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: On May 18, 1920, a very special boy opened his eyes to the world. A future pope

was born—in fact, the only Polish pope. But it would soon turn out that His Holiness Pope John Paul II would become the pope for everyone. His reach was vast, his travels international and he touched millions, yet he touched you and me as individuals.

He certainly left a significant impression on me. I had the great pleasure of having a private audience with him the day after the Vatican science council met, and I asked him if science and faith had something to say to each other. He replied that I should study the fathers of quantum physics. Here is what Max Planck, the German physicist who's considered the father of quantum physics, said:

"After 40 years, I cannot be identified as a fanatic. I'm a scientist. I come to two conclusions. The first conclusion is simply this: One, there is no matter per se; and two, there is an intelligent spirit in the world who brings the atoms into oscillation."

Consequently, what is the significance of this? John Paul II, this pope, did not run away from science, but he embraced it. In my mind, he is the great spiritual leader we need to remember. Today at 6:30, I would like to invite all the members to recognize this special pope in room 228 in this Legislature.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Peter Shurman: I beg leave to present a report on the Brampton Civic Hospital public-private partnership project from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Peter Shurman: No, thank you, Speaker. I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Shurman moves adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated May 18, 2010, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

WATER OPPORTUNITIES AND WATER CONSERVATION ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES TECHNOLOGIES DE L'EAU ET LA CONSERVATION DE L'EAU

Mr. Gerretsen moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 72, An Act to enact the Water Opportunities Act, 2010 and to amend other Acts in respect of water conservation and other matters / Projet de loi 72, Loi édictant la Loi de 2010 sur le développement des technologies de l'eau et modifiant d'autres lois en ce qui concerne la conservation de l'eau et d'autres questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1520 to 1525.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia Albanese, Laura Arthurs, Wayne Broten, Laurel C. Brownell, Jim Cansfield, Donna H. Caplan, David Carroll, Aileen Chiarelli, Bob Colle, Mike Crozier, Bruce Delaney, Bob Dhillon, Vic Dickson, Joe DiNovo, Cheri Duguid, Brad Flynn, Kevin Daniel Gerretsen, John Hoskins, Eric Hoy, Pat Jaczek, Helena Jeffrey, Linda Johnson, Rick Kormos, Peter Kular, Kuldip Lalonde, Jean-Marc Levac, Dave Mangat, Amrit Mauro, Bill McMeekin, Ted

McNeely, Phil Milloy, John Naqvi, Yasir Orazietti, David Prue, Michael Pupatello, Sandra Qaadri, Shafiq Ramal, Khalil Rinaldi, Lou Ruprecht, Tony Smith, Monique Sorbara, Greg Tabuns, Peter Van Bommel, Maria

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?
The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 44; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The minister for a short statement?

Hon. John Gerretsen: During ministerial statements.

PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO CALEDONIA ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR L'ENQUÊTE PUBLIQUE RELATIVE À LA SITUATION EXISTANT À CALEDONIA

Mr. Chudleigh moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 73, An Act to provide for a public inquiry to discover the truth about the provincial role in the ongoing dispute on the Douglas Creek Estates property in Caledonia / Projet de loi 73, Loi prévoyant une enquête publique pour découvrir la vérité sur le rôle de la Province dans le conflit en cours sur la propriété Douglas Creek Estates à Caledonia.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The bill requires the Lieutenant Governor in Council to establish a commission to inquire into and report on the provincial role in the ongoing dispute on the Douglas Creek Estates property in Caledonia and to make recommendations. The commission has the power of a commission under the Public Inquiries Act. Once the inquiry begins, the commission must make an interim report in six months and a final report in 12 months.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (SAFE BICYCLE PASSING), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (DÉPASSEMENT SÉCURITAIRE DE BICYCLETTES)

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 74, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to promote bicycle safety / Projet de loi 74, Loi modifiant le Code de la route afin de promouvoir la sécurité à bicyclette.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement?

1530

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act in connection with bicycle safety. New section 147.1 of the act is added to provide that cyclists travelling at less than the normal speed of traffic must, subject to specified exceptions, proceed in the right-hand lane or as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway.

New section 147.2 of the act provides that every driver or operator of a vehicle meeting or overtaking a person on a bicycle must maintain a safe travelling distance. The safe travelling distance is three to five feet, depending on the vehicle's speed.

In the case of a collision, the driver or operator of the vehicle is presumed to have not left a safe travelling distance between the vehicle and the bicycle. It is an offence not to leave the required safe travelling distance when passing or overtaking a bicycle. A person convicted of the offence is liable to a fine of not less than \$310 and not more than \$750 and is required to attend a remedial program. A driver or operator of a vehicle is liable to an additional fine of (a) \$1,500 if the contravention results in serious bodily harm to a cyclist or (b) \$5,000 if the contravention results in a cyclist's death.

SANDRINGHAM DEVELOPMENTS LTD. ACT, 2010

Mr. Caplan moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr33, An Act to revive Sandringham Developments Ltd.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT ACT (DISCLOSURE RE **INVESTIGATIONS), 2010**

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ADMINISTRATION FINANCIÈRE (DIVULGATION DE RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LES ENQUÊTES)

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 75, An Act to amend the Financial Administration Act to provide for the disclosure of information by prospective providers of financial advice or management services to the Minister of Finance / Projet de loi 75, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration financière pour prévoir la divulgation de renseignements au ministre des Finances par les éventuels fournisseurs de conseils financiers ou de services de gestion financière.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The bill sets out a proposed amendment to the Financial Administration Act. The proposed amendment applies if the Minister of Finance considers entering into an agreement with a person or entity to provide financial advice for management services to the minister. The minister is required to request certain information from the person or entity concerning investigations by police or regulatory authorities that may be relevant to the adviser's integrity or suitability to provide advice or services-Goldman Sachs, for instance.

VISUAL FIRE ALARM SYSTEM ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LES SYSTÈMES D'ALARME-INCENDIE À AFFICHAGE VISUEL.

Mr. Arthurs moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 76, An Act respecting visual fire alarm systems in public buildings / Projet de loi 76, Loi sur les systèmes d'alarme-incendie à affichage visuel dans les édifices publics.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1535 to 1540.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Aves

Aggelonitis, Sophia Albanese, Laura Arthurs, Wayne Broten, Laurel C. Brown, Michael A. Brownell, Jim Cansfield, Donna H. Caplan, David Chiarelli, Bob Colle, Mike Crozier, Bruce Delaney, Bob Dickson, Joe

DiNovo, Cheri Duguid, Brad Flynn, Kevin Daniel Gerretsen, John Hoskins, Eric Hoy, Pat Jaczek, Helena Jeffrey, Linda Johnson, Rick Kormos, Peter Mangat, Amrit McMeekin, Ted Milloy, John

Moridi, Reza Naqvi, Yasir Orazietti, David Pupatello, Sandra Qaadri, Shafiq Ramal, Khalil Rinaldi, Lou Ruprecht, Tony Smith, Monique Tabuns, Peter Van Bommel, Maria

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed? The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 37; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: This bill, if enacted, would provide a visual notice, in addition to the standard audio signal, that a fire alarm has been activated. This visual notice would give those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing the necessary warning to exit those buildings quickly and safely.

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC HOSPITALS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE RENFORCEMENT DES HÔPITAUX PUBLICS

Mr. Caplan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 77, An Act to amend the Public Hospitals Act with respect to board membership / Projet de loi 77, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les hôpitaux publics relativement aux membres du conseil d'administration.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1543 to 1548.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour will rise one at a time to be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia Albanese, Laura Arthurs, Wayne Broten, Laurel C. Brown, Michael A. Brownell, Jim Cansfield, Donna H. Caplan, David Carroll, Aileen Chiarelli, Bob Colle, Mike Crozier, Bruce Delaney, Bob Dickson, Joe Duguid, Brad Flynn, Kevin Daniel Gerretsen, John Hoskins, Eric Hoy, Pat Jaczek, Helena Jeffrey, Linda Johnson, Rick Lalonde, Jean-Marc McMeekin, Ted

Milloy, John Moridi, Reza Naqvi, Yasir Orazietti, David Pupatello, Sandra Qaadri, Shafiq Ramal, Khalil Rinaldi, Lou Ruprecht, Tony Smith, Monique Van Bommel, Maria Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those opposed?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 36; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. David Caplan: The Strengthening Public Hospitals Act makes amendments to the Public Hospitals Act. It prohibits elected officials, members of councils of municipalities, members of the Legislative Assembly and members of the House of Commons of Canada from sitting on public hospital boards. The legislation also prohibits the aforementioned members from being appointed as life, term or honorary directors of public hospital boards. This act will put an end to the direct conflicts of interest which occur for individuals who must balance board membership with their duty to represent their constituents.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 33(f), the time for introduction of bills has expired.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 12 midnight on Tuesday, May 18, 2010.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1551 to 1556.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia Albanese, Laura Arthurs, Wayne Broten, Laurel C. Brown, Michael A. Brownell, Jim Cansfield, Donna H. Caplan, David Carroll, Aileen Chiarelli, Bob Colle, Mike Craitor, Kim Crozier, Bruce Delaney, Bob Dickson, Joe Duguid, Brad Flynn, Kevin Daniel Gerretsen, John Hoskins, Eric Hoy, Pat Jaczek, Helena Jeffrey, Linda Johnson, Rick Lalonde, Jean-Marc Mangat, Amrit Mauro, Bill

McMeekin, Ted Naqvi, Yasir Orazietti, David Pupatello, Sandra Qaadri, Shafiq Ramal, Khalii Rinaldi, Lou Ruprecht, Tony Smith, Monique Takhar, Harinder S. Van Bommel, Maria Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Bailey, Robert Clark, Steve DiNovo, Cheri Hardeman, Ernie Hillier, Randy Kormos, Peter MacLeod, Lisa Miller, Paul Murdoch, Bill O'Toole, John Ouellette, Jerry J. Savoline, Joyce Shurman, Peter Tabuns, Peter

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 38; the nays are 14.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

WATER SUPPLY

Hon. John Gerretsen: Today I'm pleased and privileged to introduce the proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act for first reading.

Before doing so, I'd like to introduce a number of individuals who are in the east gallery here who are very much interested in this bill and have been very actively involved in giving advice with respect to it.

I'd like to introduce Anastasia Lintner, who is with Ecojustice; Tim Morris, who is with the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation; Carol Maas, who is with the Polis Project; Mark Hinchcliffe, who's with Hennessy and Hinchcliffe; Chris Holcroft, who is with the Rideau Institute; Derek Stack, who is with Great Lakes United; and Brent Wootton, who is with Fleming College. They're all here to join us at the introduction of this bill.

I would also like to introduce the ministry folks who have really been very actively involved in putting this bill together, and I think they should be given credit where credit is due. They include John Lieou and Paul Evans, two assistant deputy ministers; Sharon Bailey, who's the director of water services; Kelly Brown and George Rocoski; as well as two members of my own staff: Anna Head, who is an intern in our office this summer, along with Brenda Lucas, who gives us excellent advice on all issues relating to water.

If passed, this bill would make Ontario the place to come to for new technologies and leading-edge products and services in water treatment and water conservation. As part of our government's Open Ontario plan, it would lay the foundation for innovation in this fast-growing global sector, bring investments and create good jobs for the people of Ontario.

For too long we have taken our water, particularly in this province, for granted. As pressures on water continue to grow as a result of climate change and population growth, there will be a 40% gap between global supply and demand for water in the next 20 years. We have a clear responsibility, as Ontarians and as legislators in this Legislature, to fully understand what this incredible resource means to us and to be prepared to protect and conserve it for future generations.

Water is a distinct part of our heritage. In fact, the name "Ontario" has its roots in the words of a number of aboriginal languages that describe a "beautiful lake." We have a vision of Ontario becoming a North American centre of water technology and innovation, helping to provide the solutions so badly needed around the world.

Let me be clear: We want to export our know-how and expertise. We will not allow the bulk export of water.

Our proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act is intended to deliver three key outcomes:

—to make Ontario a North American leader in the development and sale of technologies for water conservation and treatment. Today I had the opportunity to be at Discovery 10, which is at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. It is truly inspiring to see the over 300 different companies that are involved in the clean tech industry, including many in the clean tech water industry, be represented there and be actively involved in trying to get others interested in the products and services they're selling. There has been a huge advance that has taken place over the last five to 10 years.

—to encourage sustainable infrastructure in conservation planning, including using innovative technologies to solve water, waste water and stormwater infrastructure challenges.

—to encourage all Ontarians to use water more wisely.

As a key part in delivering these outcomes, the proposed act, if passed, would create the water technology acceleration project—or, as we like to call it, TAP—a corporation that would support research and development as well as the commercialization of new technologies and innovations in Ontario's water sector.

We are looking at the success of these kinds of partnerships in other leading jurisdictions, such as in Germany, Singapore and Israel, and we are serious about making Ontario a strong and competitive player in a global sector currently valued at around \$400 billion per year and soon to be \$1 trillion per year.

The proposed Water Opportunities Act would involve creating partnerships with universities, colleges, municipalities, industry and entrepreneurs, along with others. We are working together with the Ministries of Research and Innovation, Energy and Infrastructure, Economic Development and Trade, Natural Resources, and Municipal Affairs and Housing to make this happen.

Just as importantly, we are focusing on transforming Ontario from being a water waster to a water conserver. We all know that water efficiency is the most cost-effective way to generate additional water and waste water treatment capacity. Investing in water conservation and innovative technology can avoid or defer significant infrastructure costs. Ontario examples clearly demonstrate that the cost of conservation programs by municipalities may be as little as one quarter of the cost of new infrastructure.

In Ontario, we use an average of 260 litres of water per person per day, and we know we can do much better than that at conserving. The proposed act aims to encourage efforts that would significantly reduce Ontario's residential water use. As a matter of fact, in Germany and the United Kingdom, for example, average water use is around 150 litres per day, almost half of what we use here in Ontario.

If passed, this act would also allow the government to bring in water efficiency standards for consumer products such as faucets, shower heads and rain sensors. It would also allow us to require standardized information about water use on water bills, so that Ontarians know more about their water use than they currently do, and would enable government facilities to demonstrate leadership through water conservation planning.

We intend to consult widely on the proposed legislation, as we already have. My parliamentary assistant, Helena Jaczek, the member from Oak Ridges-Markham, and I have met with many individuals, with companies large and small, with many academics and with many municipal leaders in the water business to talk about what could be in an act like this. We've already done a lot of consultation, but we have to do a lot more on the act itself. We intend to consult widely on the proposed legislation as it moves forward and, if passed, as we develop the new regulations under it.

Our government's bold, progressive and visionary approach will help provide solutions to one of the world's most pressing environmental challenges and put Ontario's expertise, which is already available around the world, on the map even more.

It's the right approach. It is the right thing to do for our environment, and it's the right thing to do to make Ontario open for business in the new, clean economy. I urge all of my colleagues to join together in supporting this bill.

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

MOIS DE LA PRÉVENTION DE L'AGRESSION SEXUELLE

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I rise to recognize May as Sexual Assault Prevention Month in Ontario. Sexual assault is a crime of power, of control, of war, of oppression. It is a crime committed in dark corners and in broad daylight. Its effects are seen in the health and wellbeing of our society. Sexual assault knows no social or generational boundaries.

The statistics are chilling. The United Nations estimates that globally, one in three women experiences physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. In Ontario in 2008, there were more than 7,300 sexual assaults reported to police, but we know that the number of incidents was in fact much higher, because in Canada less than 10% of sexual assaults are reported to police.

En 1993, les Nations Unies ont adopté la Déclaration sur l'élimination de la violence à l'égard des femmes. Ce document d'une grande importance reconnaît que la violence contre les femmes ne ressemble en rien aux autres types de violence; c'est un crime d'oppression et de discrimination que les hommes infligent aux femmes.

It recognizes that violence against women stems from a long history of inequality between men and women which, to this day, continues to prevent women from fully participating and succeeding in all parts of our society.

The statistics reflect this gendered reality of a crime perpetrated by men against women. According to Statistics Canada, police data for 2007 show that the female rates of sexual victimization were nearly six times higher than the rates for males, and that 97% of persons accused of sexual offences were male.

These hard truths are why we must all take action. It begins with understanding the reality of the risk factors for sexual victimization; it begins with changing our attitudes; it begins with holding the perpetrator accountable; it begins with not blaming the victim; and it begins with giving our children the positive role models they deserve and teaching them about healthy relationships.

Nous ne mettrons fin à la violence sexuelle qu'à condition de mettre fin à l'inégalité qui persiste entre les hommes et les femmes. Il nous reste encore beaucoup à faire, et les centres d'aide et autres organismes partout en Ontario se dévouent sans relâche pour sensibiliser la

population et aider les victimes d'agression sexuelle. Merci pour votre dévouement à l'égard des femmes.

There is much work to be done, and sexual assault centres and other organizations across Ontario are working hard to raise public awareness and support victims. Thank you for your dedication to women.

Our government seeks to be a strong partner in this work and has increased funding to \$13 million a year for the province's 42 sexual assault centres. This ensures that each year more than 40,000 women are helped to rebuild their lives. Ontario's front-line workers have created a safe haven for the thousands of women whose lives have been destroyed by sexual violence. The White Ribbon Campaign, the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres and others are engaging men and boys in speaking out against gender-based violence.

Ontario has accomplished much by investing in public education and its services for victims and their children, but our work is far from done. That is why we are embarking on the development of what will be our province's first sexual violence action plan. My friend and colleague the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex will be leading our government's efforts by engaging in conversations across the province with our partners and experts, service providers, and most certainly with survivors, as we look to better support those who have been victimized to heal and as we lay the groundwork for a future free of oppression and discrimination, and without sexual violence.

This plan is being created with Ontario's women in mind so that every woman, young or old, aboriginal, francophone, immigrant, disabled, gay or straight, can feel safe in her home, her workplace and her community, so that she may live without the fear of sexual violence, because they deserve it. True equality requires it.

J'invite tous les députés présents aujourd'hui à se joindre à moi pour renouveler l'engagement de l'Ontario envers l'élimination de l'agression sexuelle, parce que telle victoire mènera à un monde réellement meilleur pour les futures générations.

I invite all the members here today to join me in declaring Ontario's renewed commitment to the elimination of violence against women, because when we succeed we will truly be creating a better world for this generation and the next.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

WATER SUPPLY

Mr. Toby Barrett: I have about two and a half minutes to respond to a water bill promising to make us a North American leader. We'd better run that one by Obama's Buy America procurement policy.

I got a copy of the bill. My staffer was locked out of the announcement this morning, although I did read about this in the Saturday Star. Robert Benzie quotes a Liberal insider: "This will help people to save money on their water bills," said the senior high-ranking insider. That could be worrisome. I'm concerned that people won't be able to afford this McGuinty water bill if they're required to, because of pricing, use less water if there is a price hike, a fee hike or a tax hike, so we'll see on that one. This could be a warning, obviously, for residential users, industrial users, farmers with water-taking permits and farmers dependent on irrigation-based agriculture. I think of carrots, potatoes, obviously, tobacco.

The cost: What will McGuinty's water bill add up to? We know that former health minister Caplan's water and sewer private member's bill would add something like an additional \$600 a year on the bill. We recognize and we understand that clean water is essential to the health and success of a thriving and prosperous Ontario, but there's little doubt that as the international community puts a greater emphasis on clean water, they, too, will understand the significance of the expertise that resides in this great province, the expertise that resides in China, for example, and elsewhere.

For these reasons our former government, for decades, really, committed to enacting water legislation, regulation, the recommendations of O'Connor—the commitment to the centre of excellence in Walkerton. We put forward the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act some eight years before this bill.

The proof is in the pudding. We'll just see how much this will cost people and how it works out.

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: As the Progressive Conservative critic for women's issues, I'm very pleased to speak today about Sexual Assault Prevention Month. We have now been recognizing the month of May for over 20 years, and this month gives all of us here in this assembly an opportunity to renew our commitment to ending the sexual violence that is faced every day in the province of Ontario. Unfortunately, it is primarily young women who are subjected to sexual violence.

Acts of sexual violence can be both physical and psychological. Regardless, they can both be, and they are, devastating to the victim, and can range anywhere from sexual abuse to unwanted sexual touching or name-calling. The effects of sexual violence are similar to those of other violent crimes. It leaves the victim feeling anger, confusion and frustration.

Sexual violence is experienced by Canadian women in particular every day. It can be in their home, at work, at school or on the street. It is estimated that close to 50% of all Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of sexual violence in their lifetime, and young women between the ages of 15 and 24 are most likely to be victimized.

Over half of the sexual assault victims reported to police in 2007 were children and youth under the age of 18. However, and this is sad, only about one in 10 sexual

assaults are reported. Victims commonly feel that the incidents are not important enough to report, or they fear that reporting will lead to further victimization or stigmatization.

These statistics reveal why Sexual Assault Prevention Month is so crucial. There is so much more work for all of us to do. This month we can raise awareness, we can make sure there is a dialogue, and we can support the victims and make sure they know where they can go. People in this province, whether men, women, boys or girls, should all be able to feel safe each and every day. So I urge all members of this House to work together and within their communities to end sexual violence.

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I rise also to address Sexual Assault Prevention Month in May.

We talk about other places in the world where there are wars on women. We think of Darfur; we think of the former Yugoslavia, where it became an aspect of modern warfare to attack women. But let me tell you that in the United States—this came through a noted journalist—700,000 women every year are sexually assaulted. Now, if that's not a war on women, I don't know what is, and that's in the United States. We can only imagine—I don't have the statistics—that it's similar for Canada.

What do women need now? Well, first of all, they need a place to run to—a safe place. We need more housing and more beds. I just want to give a shout out to Redwood shelter in my own riding. They do phenomenal work. Victim Services Program of Toronto does phenomenal work.

And a thank you: Despite the fact that this government will not move on my motion to have an all-women, all-party committee to look at sexual assault and domestic violence, Donna Cansfield and Christine Elliott came together with me, and we launched Ruth's Daughters, which will actually work with women across the faith spectrum to get them active around domestic violence, which is part of the sexual assault against women; 12% of all violent crime in this province is domestic violence.

We ask now that we all work together, absolutely, to try to create affordable housing and more beds and shelters; to try to change the fact that women make 71 cents on the dollar. We need to make women economically independent, so that they have options so they can get away from continued sexual violence.

I'm going leave some room for my benchmate to speak about the other bill, but suffice to say: Not enough, not yet. Let's wait. Let's do more. Thank you.

1620

WATER SUPPLY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: First, I want to thank the environmental NGOs who push for, lobby for and advocate for action on water, and who understand quite clearly, quite

well, that there is tremendous economic opportunity here for Ontario, for Canada, in clean water technology. Not only is there opportunity, but there's a necessity. It's quite correct: Our world is changing. The availability of fresh water is going to be in decline, and if we in fact don't take action now, we will face far more difficult choices in the future.

Unfortunately—and I know the Minister of the Environment will not be surprised—I am not going to hold my breath for those opportunities to be realized here in Ontario. I have to say that I was present when the Premier made his announcement of his climate change targets and action plan a number of years ago. I was present in December when both the Minister of the Environment and the Environmental Commissioner reported that Ontario would not meet even those weak targets. I was present when the budget was presented. I understand that the funding for public transit has been cut. So even in the weak targets within a plan that was failing, further reductions have been put forward.

I was around for the greater Golden Horseshoe growth strategy—tremendous optimism on the part of the environmental community when that came forward. By the time the final product came before us, what we had was something that the Neptis Foundation and the Pembina Institute said would give little better than business as usual.

I have to say that I was part of the parliamentary committee that went around and listened to presentations on the Green Energy Act and heard credible testimony that the energy efficiency standards in the building code are not enforced in this province. I raised the issue with the then Minister of Energy, who said that this was a matter for another ministry.

If we're not enforcing the efficiency codes that we have now for energy, what leads one to believe that they will be enforced for water in the way that they have to be enforced? I say this to the environmental movement: They have to rally now; they have to pull together their forces; they have to push to ensure that this bill, which will most likely pass, actually has regulations that go with it that will be of consequence.

I do not expect this government to actually take on the fights that are going to be necessary to actually make a difference. I hope that this bill will at least provide the framework for a future government with an environmental commitment to make a difference.

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Peter Shurman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario—as a matter of fact, I have about 4,000 of them—to prevent the growth of the illegal tobacco trade crisis.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the illegal trade of cigarettes already accounts for almost 50% of all cigarettes purchased in the province and illegal products are available at a price that is already much lower than that for legal cigarettes (average \$70 for a carton of 200 legal cigarettes versus \$10 for 200 cigarettes in a plastic bag); and

"Whereas the HST, effective July 1, 2010, will raise legal tobacco prices by 8%, or another \$4 to \$7 per carton of 200 cigarettes, making illegal cigarettes even cheaper, and will likely only make the problem of illegal

cigarettes worse in the province; and

"Whereas this situation will represent further losses to already suffering law-abiding retailers while only benefiting the organized crime groups behind the illegal trade:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To prevent the growth of illicit trade by temporarily reducing the provincial tobacco tax to offset the impact of the HST and keep the price of legal tobacco products static until the contraband problem in Ontario is under control."

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and give to it page Michelle.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition that is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontarians pay more for popular generic drugs for diabetes, high blood pressure and other common health issues than patients in other jurisdictions; and

"Whereas Ontarians deserve fair prescription drug prices so that families and seniors are not charged more than those in other countries; and

"Whereas some members of the opposition have sided with large corporations to preserve the status quo rather than make prescription medications more affordable for Ontario patients by supporting the proposed drug reforms:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians by passing the government's legislation to lower the cost of prescription medications."

I am pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Lars to carry it for me.

ELMVALE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. Jim Wilson: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Elmvale District High School is an important part of the community of Elmvale and surrounding area; and

"Whereas the school is widely recognized as having high educational requirements and well known for producing exceptional graduates who have gone on to work as professionals in health care, agriculture, community safety, the trades and many other fields that give back to the community; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep an actual rural school open in Elmvale:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Education support the citizens of Elmvale and flow funding to the local school board so that Elmvale District High School can remain open to serve the vibrant community of Elmvale and surrounding area."

I agree with this petition and will sign it.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas professional allowance revenues for generic drugs are not being used to directly benefit patient care and there being evidence of abuse in the system;

"Whereas Ontarians pay far too much for generic drugs because of these professional allowances; ...

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to pursue legislation that will put an end to this flawed system of professional allowances for generic drugs in order to reinvest the savings to the benefit of Ontarians."

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature to it, and send it to the table with Jacob.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas multiple industrial wind farm projects are being considered by the government of Ontario in the absence of independent, scientific studies on the longterm effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to put a moratorium on any renewable energy approvals for the construction of industrial wind farms in the province of Ontario until such time as it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms have been fully studied and addressed."

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of the riding of Sudbury:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning, a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients under conditions ...; and

Whereas since October 2009, insured PET scans are "performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature to it, and send it to the table with page Lars.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we never want to see another tragedy like Walkerton ever again. The health and safety of Ontarians can never come second to profit and greed. Clean, safe drinking water is a right all Ontarians should be able to enjoy.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to upgrade our current water filtration system;

"To continue to monitor and test our water systems;

"To continue to strengthen Ontario's trust in the safety of our drinking water;

"To continue to invest in new systems and personnel to monitor and test our water;

"To never forget the mistakes of the past and always hold our water supply to the highest standard;

"To continue to invest in the health and safety of Ontarians through our water supply."

I agree with this petition, sign it, and send it via page Nicole.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: "Whereas Cambridge Memorial Hospital and other hospitals in the Waterloo region are experiencing substantial increased demands due to population growth; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government's freeze on new long-term-care facilities has resulted in additional longterm-care patients in our hospitals; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government's cuts to hospital funding have resulted in a dangerous environment for patients and staff in Cambridge and across Ontario; and "Whereas the approved new expansion of the hospital has been delayed by the McGuinty government and this has contributed to the funding shortfall;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) That the McGuinty government meet its obligations to introduce a population-needs-based funding formula for hospitals as has been done in other Canadian provinces;

"(2) That the McGuinty government proceed immediately with the approved new expansion of Cambridge Memorial Hospital."

1630

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury, Nickel Belt and Port Colborne.

"Whereas the strike at Vale Inco's mines, mill and smelter in Sudbury and Port Colborne has been going on for too long and showing no chance of settlement; and

"Whereas this strike is causing hardship to the 3,300 workers, their families, the communities and the businesses and contributing to a significant net drain to the economy; and

"Whereas the resumption of production with replacement workers has demonstrated an unwillingness to negotiate a fair collective agreement with the workers and has produced undue tension in the community; and

"Whereas anti-replacement legislation in other provinces has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of replacement workers; and

"Encourage both parties to negotiate and reach a fair settlement."

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to the Clerk with page Lars.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Bob Chiarelli: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontarians pay more for popular generic drugs for diabetes, high blood pressure and other common health issues than patients in other jurisdictions; and

"Whereas Ontarians deserve fair prescription drug prices so that families and seniors are not charged more than those in other countries; and

"Whereas some members of the opposition have sided with large corporations to preserve the status quo rather than make prescription medications more affordable for Ontario patients by supporting the proposed drug reforms;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians by passing the government's legislation to lower the cost of prescription medications."

I support the petition and have signed it.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition that I picked up last Friday from the good folks at Gananoque Pharmasave. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly.

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy now."

I agree with the petition, and I will sign it and send it to the table.

MINING INDUSTRY

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury.

"We, the citizens of Sudbury, are concerned for the sustainability of the mining resources in our area. Historically, the mines were managed for long-term sustainability and profitability in all cycles. However, Vale Inco is now destroying the long-term dependability of these resources through their high-grade mining habits.

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to guard against unchecked, irresponsible high-grade mining practices."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk with Lars.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 30(c), the 90 minutes allotted to routine proceedings have expired.

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Administrator was pleased to assent to certain bills in his office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following are the titles of bills to which His Honour did assent:

Bill 16, An Act to implement 2010 Budget measures and to enact or amend various Acts / Projet de loi 16, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2010 et édictant ou modifiant diverses lois.

Bill 17, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010 / Projet de loi 17, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2010.

Bill 19, An Act to proclaim Vimy Ridge Day / Projet de loi 19, Loi proclamant le Jour de la bataille de Vimy.

Bill 24, An Act to proclaim Franco-Ontarian Day / Projet de loi 24, Loi proclamant le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes.

Bill 50, An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur l'intégrité des députés.

Bill 158, An Act to repeal and replace the statutes governing The Certified General Accountants Association of Ontario, the Certified Management Accountants of Ontario and The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario / Projet de loi 158, Loi visant à abroger et à remplacer les lois régissant l'Association des comptables généraux accrédités de l'Ontario, les Comptables en management accrédités de l'Ontario et l'Institut des comptables agréés de l'Ontario.

Bill 231, An Act to amend the Election Act and the Election Finances Act / Projet de loi 231, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale et la Loi sur le financement des élections.

Bill 235, An Act to enact the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010 and to amend other Acts / Projet de loi 235, Loi édictant la Loi de 2010 sur la protection des consommateurs d'énergie et modifiant d'autres lois.

Bill 236, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Act / Projet de loi 236, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les régimes de retraite.

Bill 242, An Act to amend the Education Act and certain other Acts in relation to early childhood educators, junior kindergarten and kindergarten, extended day programs and certain other matters / Projet de loi 242, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation et d'autres lois en ce qui concerne les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la maternelle et le jardin d'enfants, les programmes de jour prolongé et d'autres questions.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FAR NORTH ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR LE GRAND NORD

Mrs. Jeffrey moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 191, An Act with respect to land use planning and protection in the Far North / Projet de loi 191, Loi relative à l'aménagement et à la protection du Grand Nord.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Sault Ste Marie. I'd also like to acknowledge a number of Ministry of Natural Resources staff who are here with us in the gallery today, and I'd like to thank them for their support.

Last month, as minister I had the opportunity to visit the Far North of Ontario. It was an awe-inspiring experience to fly over this vast and remote region of our province and to see first-hand the beauty of the boreal landscape stretching below. Aside from the beauty of the north, I was struck by the warm hospitality which was extended to me by the First Nations communities that I visited.

I would like to take this chance to thank the people from Neskantaga, Marten Falls, Eabametoong and Mish-keegogamang for sharing their knowledge and experiences with me. I came home with a greater appreciation for the extraordinary connection between the First Nations people and the land, as well as the challenges of living in such isolated communities.

My visit also gave me a greater appreciation of the urgency of providing First Nations in the Far North with stronger support and partnership in tackling their very serious economic and social issues.

With this experience still fresh in my mind, I'm proud to rise in the House today to move second reading of Bill 191, the Far North Act, 2010. This milestone legislation would place Ontario among world leaders in boreal protection and enable economic opportunities that would potentially contribute to greater stability and prosperity for the people and the communities of the Far North.

Bill 191 would aim to protect at least 225,000 square kilometres of the Far North in a network of protected areas. It would allow sustainable economic development of the region's abundant natural resources. It would ensure that Far North First Nations can participate in land use decisions that affect their communities, their culture and their quality of life. And it would support the environmental, social and economic interests of all Ontarians.

We know that the abundance of untapped forest, mineral and renewable energy resources in the Far North has the potential to provide a more prosperous future for the people who live there, as well as economic benefits for the province as a whole. Ontario's vision for the future of the Far North is to work jointly with First Nation communities to strike the right balance between sustainable development of those resources and protection of one of the world's largest intact boreal ecosystems.

Bill 191 not only supports that vision, it also enshrines a new respect and working relationship between the Ontario government and the Far North First Nations. If passed, this proposed legislation would mark the first time in Ontario's history that a requirement for First Nations approval of land use plans on public lands would be embedded in law.

Our Far North initiative addresses land use planning on both a broad scale, as well as at the local community level. Bill 191 sets out a process for Ontario to work jointly with Far North First Nations to develop an allencompassing land use strategy for the region. This broad-scale strategy would improve our overall understanding of the Far North and provide science and land-related information to better support community-based land use plans.

In preparing this strategy, we would jointly develop policy statements covering a variety of subjects, such as biological diversity, electricity transmission, roads, other infrastructure as well as cultural and heritage values.

At the local level, community-based land use planning would allow Ontario and First Nations to determine together what areas of the Far North will be protected and where environmentally sustainable economic development may take place. It will provide First Nations with an opportunity to collect and record their historical use and relationship with the land for future generations. It will help build capacity within communities through skills development and employment opportunities. And it will ultimately provide resource industries with muchneeded clarity and certainty about how and where economic development such as forestry, mining and renewable energy may take place in the future.

On my trip to the Far North, I had the pleasure of visiting some First Nation communities that have taken the lead and are already working with my ministry to develop community-based land use plans for their areas. I'm pleased to report that, so far, eight communities have established joint land use planning teams, and they're making significant progress towards the preparation of community-based plans. There are also 25 communities at various stages of engagement with my ministry in preparation for initiating plans.

To further assist this process, my ministry negotiated 30 transfer payment agreements with First Nations communities, tribal councils and Nishnawbe Aski Nation from 2008 to April of this year. Through these agreements, we're helping to put in place the components necessary for sound and effective land use planning. We're investing in training, science and information, supporting greater community involvement and building First Nations capacity.

Communities are using the funds to hire project coordinators and planners to conduct community meetings, deliver workshops and provide advice and expertise. Other communities are using the funds to provide local training in how to use geographic information systems technology, a skill that will be applied to collecting traditional aboriginal knowledge related to lands and resources as well as cultural areas. Projects are also under way to gather information on woodland caribou populations and habitats as part of a broader effort to understand the species. These are just a few of the ways we're working with First Nations in the Far North to boost community capacity skills and expertise around land use planning.

Last October, the government tabled a number of amendments to the proposed legislation that are reflected in the bill before the House today. These amendments were made to address comments received from Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Far North First Nations, partners and the public following first reading last June. I want to thank all those who took the time to make their views known. Their valuable input has helped make this stronger legislation, and I would like to highlight some of the changes for the members of the House today.

One of the amendments responded to a concern from First Nations that the legislation's protection objective for the Far North was unilaterally imposed and would be established by Ontario. We have addressed that concern by clarifying that the areas for protection in the Far North would be identified by First Nations in a joint process with Ontario and designated through the community-based land use planning process.

In response to concerns that the Far North land use strategy would be prepared by the Minister of Natural Resources, with First Nations only given unspecified opportunities to participate, we amended the bill to state explicitly that Far North First Nations would be invited to work together in contributing to the preparation of the strategy.

We also heard that the proposed legislation didn't provide First Nations with an established leadership role. The bill was amended to clarify that it is indeed individual First Nations who indicate their interest in initiating the planning process and then work with Ontario through a joint planning team to prepare a land use plan.

First Nations also expressed the concern that previously they felt that they would not have an opportunity to ensure that the definition of protected area categories reflected their understanding of protection. We have amended the bill so that categories of protected areas are now on the list of policies that we will develop jointly with First Nations in preparing the land use strategy.

Previously, there were concerns expressed that some areas of the Far North would be closed to development in the meantime, because it would take a number of years to complete land use plans for all Far North communities. The bill now addresses that concern by setting out specific exceptions that could allow development to proceed under certain circumstances, particularly if the development is predominantly for local community use.

As these and other amendments demonstrate, Ontario has been listening to the concerns that First Nations and stakeholders have expressed about Bill 191, and we've taken the steps necessary to address those concerns.

In addition, I am pleased to advise the House that I will recommend that the bill again be referred to standing committee for further public hearings after second reading. This would provide additional opportunities for further input and discussion.

We will also continue to work with participating First Nations and partners to examine opportunities for some development to proceed at the same time a community-based land use plan is being prepared. We're considering, as well, whether more clarity is needed regarding how First Nations and the Ministry of Natural Resources could improve the way we work together on the Far North land use strategy. I'm confident that, together, we will develop a bill that meets the concerns of all parties and benefits all Ontarians.

Ontario's vision for the Far North is built on an understanding that this region is part of the global environment and makes an essential contribution to global biodiversity. The Far North of Ontario is indeed one of the

world's last great boreal ecosystems, a vast and remote landscape of largely untouched forests, pristine lakes and rivers, ocean coastline, tundra and wetland. It's home to woodland caribou, the American marten, and Ontario's only population of Arctic fox, snow geese and beluga whales.

The world's southernmost population of polar bears, a species that we have recently designated as threatened in Ontario, lives along the coastline of James Bay and Hudson Bay. Golden eagle and wolverine are among the 200 other species in the region that are designated at varying degrees of risk.

Every spring millions of migratory birds fly thousands of miles north to nest in the Far North's boreal forests, and many areas of our Ontario coastline are internationally important summer breeding grounds for Canada geese, snow geese, and varieties of sea duck and shorebird.

In this International Year of Biodiversity, it is appropriate that we are putting forward legislation that would provide protection for such an extraordinary variety and abundance of our planet's precious biodiversity.

We should be proud that Bill 191 also represents one of the largest land protection commitments in North America to fight global climate change. As in other polar regions of the world, the effects of climate change are readily apparent in the Far North of Ontario. Every year, the sea ice in Hudson Bay and James Bay is breaking up earlier and freezing up much later. This in turn is taking a toll on the overall health and longevity of Ontario's polar bear population by reducing the amount of time the bears can spend on the ice hunting for seals.

Climate change is also causing greater frequency and intensity of wind and ice storms across the Far North. The resulting blowdowns of forest stands, along with the warmer temperatures, are making northern forests more vulnerable to disease, insect infestations and forest fires.

It's difficult to anticipate all the impacts climate change might have in the future on individual species or ecosystems. Entirely new conditions may emerge as species and ecosystems respond and adapt to climate change in unique ways.

We should not forget that climate change can and will have social and economic consequences for the Far North. Increased forest fires could threaten business operations. Changing weather could also make some communities less accessible, particularly with the potential impact on getting supplies in through the winter road network, as these frozen roads are not lasting as long as they have in the past.

The Far North land use planning strategy set out in the bill would help us better understand, adapt and plan for a range of climate change impacts.

1650

We believe the Far North itself is one of our most valuable tools in the fight to reduce the effects of climate change. Acting as a giant sponge, the region's immense boreal landscape helps to filter the earth's atmosphere by absorbing more than 12.5 million tonnes of carbon

dioxide from the air every year and storing in it trees, soil and peat. By aiming to keep at least half of the Far North protected and free from industrial development, Bill 191 would help ensure the region maintains its natural capacity to absorb and store carbon dioxide. Regardless of where we live in Ontario or the world, we would all benefit from this decision to protect the Far North.

The Far North of Ontario is clearly a global national treasure and one of our province's greatest environmental and economic assets. With this proposed legislation, we have an opportunity to fulfill an exciting new vision for the future of the Far North and its people. We have an opportunity to assist First Nations communities in the Far North to work toward economic self-sufficiency and open a door to a better future for their children and their grandchildren, and we have an opportunity to position Ontario as a world leader in boreal conservation and climate change mitigation.

Our challenge moving forward is to support sustainable resource development that will not compromise the region's ecological integrity and biodiversity. With the participation of First Nations communities and by providing for input from resource industries, environmental groups and other stakeholders, Bill 191 gives us the tools to meet that challenge.

Bill 191 supports our shared commitment to undertake comprehensive land use planning for the Far North of Ontario that will have lasting benefits for our environment, our economy, our climate and our northern way of life. We have a clear responsibility to Ontarians today and to future generations to pass this proposed legislation.

I look forward to participating in the debate on this important piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Sault Ste. Marie.

Mr. David Orazietti: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to support the Minister of Natural Resources on second reading of Bill 191, the Far North Act, 2010. As you are aware, Speaker, our government is moving forward with this legislation for a number of reasons, and I am pleased to have an opportunity this afternoon to outline the rationale behind that as well as the consultations that have taken place and will continue to take place with First Nations to ensure that, on this side of the House, we get this legislation right.

I think it's historic in many ways. Most bills go out to consultation, if at all, a single time. This bill will be going out to consultation in the Far North a second time and involves discussions that have taken place over about a two-year period to ensure that the concerns expressed by First Nations and by Ontarians are included in the bill, and that there are opportunities to make amendments to ensure that this legislation is effective for all Ontarians.

The Far North region stretches roughly from the 51st parallel to Hudson Bay and east from the Manitoba border to James Bay and the Quebec border. The Far North of Ontario is one of the last great wilderness spaces on our planet, a boreal landscape so vast that it takes up a staggering 42% of Ontario's land base.

When the decision was made to work with First Nations on land use planning for this immense and largely undeveloped region of our province, the Premier set out three key goals: first of all, to provide First Nations in the Far North with a joint role in determining how lands they have historically used will be developed; secondly, to protect at least half of the Far North in an interconnected network of conservation lands—that's the roughly 225,000 square kilometres that have been referred to by those who are familiar with this bill, First Nations and in the discussions that have taken place in the Far North; and thirdly, to enable sustainable development of the region's natural resources in a manner that benefits First Nations and takes into account ecological and cultural values.

Bill 191 is an important step forward in achieving those goals. It would give us the land use and protection tools we need ensure the Far North remains one of Ontario's greatest environmental and economic assets.

We know that the interest in the Far North—mining, forestry and green energy potential—is rapidly growing. That's great news for everyone living in the Far North and that's great news for all Ontarians. As was signalled in the 2010 budget, passed today at third reading, our government remains committed to supporting industrial exploration and investment in the Far North in cooperation with First Nations, creating new jobs and long-term economic opportunities.

Despite the vast natural resource potential in the Far North, there is currently very little industrial activity. In the coming decades, the region will undoubtedly see more people and more pressure for development. That's why it is so important that we act now to ensure we establish clear and open policy directions, in partnership with the people living in the Far North.

We want to ensure that development of the Far North's resources is orderly, sustainable and meets the protection goals of Ontario and First Nation communities. Bill 191 would balance environmental protection and economic development right across the region and it would work with policies and legislation already in place, including the northern growth plan, which has been developed in consultation with northerners—there were certainly extensive consultations in my community of Sault Ste. Marie, and I know in many other communities across the province—as well as the Green Energy Act and the Mining Act, to provide us with unparalleled opportunity to act strategically in achieving this balance.

As members of the House are aware, one of the most promising and exciting development opportunities in northern Ontario in perhaps a century is the area that has been referred to as the Ring of Fire. While still in the exploration stage, current estimates suggest that there may be more than 100 years of chromite production contained in the Ring of Fire, as well as sizable nickel, copper and platinum deposits.

As a northerner, I'm excited about the potential for this mineral-rich area to be a major economic development contributor to northern Ontario's economy and a benefit to the provincial economy. This creates the opportunity for significant regional and community infrastructure development and increased value-added manufacturing opportunities in northern Ontario. This includes economic development opportunities and jobs for First Nation communities, businesses and other communities, similar to the benefits we've seen with the De Beers diamond mine near Attawapiskat.

Through community-based land use planning, Ontario will work jointly with First Nation communities to establish a collaborative approach to planning and development on lands in the Ring of Fire, as well as throughout the rest of the Far North region. First Nations peoples make up 90% of the Far North's population of about 24,000 people, living in small communities spread widely across this vast area. Many First Nation communities in the Far North are already working with the province on community-based land use plans that would determine where areas will be protected and where environmentally sustainable economic development may take place. Eight First Nation communities have established land use planning teams and are making significant progress toward the preparation of community land use plans, and this is good news for those communities and for all of us.

There are 25 First Nation communities at various degrees of engagement with the Ministry of Natural Resources. We have provided funding to 30 First Nation communities, tribal councils and NAN through partnership agreements and transfer of payments, and we have provided funding for everyone who has come forward and is interested in developing a land use plan in the Far North. Some \$30 million will be provided over four years—that was announced in the 2008 budget—to support land use planning in the Far North. In addition, we will develop a broad-based Far North land use strategy which will provide the framework and tools to support community-based land use planning.

Bill 191 would establish the legislative foundation for First Nations and Ontario to proceed jointly with community land use planning across the Far North and work together on developing a land use strategy. This bill would ensure that First Nations are the ones that initiate community-based land use planning, while working jointly with the province to that end.

1700

It would require that the Minister of Natural Resources cannot approve a community land use plan until after it has been approved by First Nations communities. A community land use plan must be in place before specific major developments are constructed, such as mine openings, forestry and wind and water power, or all-year roadways. However, the bill also states that specific activities may be permitted while land use planning is under way. Those activities could include mineral claimstaking and exploration, feasibility studies such as wind testing, and environmental clean-up activities such as what is going on right now with the Mid-Canada Line radar sites. Other activities that contribute to First

Nations communities' needs or are predominantly for community use may also be permitted if certain conditions are met.

It is not essential that a full, complete land use plan be developed, but for major endeavours that will change the landscape of the Far North, those land use plans need to be put in place, and those land use plans can be developed while the First Nation group, for example, is working with the ministry to achieve that. These permitted developments would not jeopardize the protection goals of the bill or weaken the land use planning process, but would allow communities to better be prepared for future land use possibilities once a plan is completed. As we moved forward with community-based land use planning, we want to be confident that the plans are built on the best science and knowledge available in order to address the Far North's many complex ecological, social and resource-related issues.

Aboriginal traditional knowledge will also play a key role in increasing our understanding of the Far North and will make essential contributions to the land use planning process. The ancestors of present-day First Nations inhabited the Far North region thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans. The Cree and Ojibway peoples who live there today continue to have a close connection with the land. Land use planning is an opportunity for First Nations in the Far North to document their historical use of the land and draw on their unique insights into the natural world around them, as handed down from generation to generation over many centuries.

Because the Far North is so remote, well beyond most of Ontario's major road and rail systems, there is much about this vast region that we are not aware of. For example, there is limited mapping information available in the Far North. Even those areas that have been mapped were last charted more than 30 years ago at a scale where only major features can be displayed. To fill this and other knowledge gaps, the ministry is working with First Nations to increase the overall understanding of the Far North through 32 information and knowledge management projects. We are close to creating a more detailed topographic map for the Far North, and we are also working on producing more detailed maps of all of the Far North, showing rivers, streams, lakes and existing infrastructure at a level of detail that is more effective for better land use planning. Another project will map vegetation and terrain to help identify wildlife habitat and other ecologically significant areas.

This information will be useful in monitoring changes to the landscape over time, whether from natural or other disturbances. Other mapping efforts are focusing on water sources and watersheds. Those maps will enable communities, planners and scientists to determine what and who is upstream or downstream for any location on the landscape.

Other projects will study the Far North's unique ecosystems to gain insights into species' protection and the effects of human-caused and environmental disturbances such as forest fires.

We know that the forest and peatlands in the Far North help fight global climate change by storing billions of tonnes of carbon. Research projects are under way to look at how the region's ability to store carbon in the future might be affected by climate change and industrial development.

It's important to note that Bill 191 is the result of a collaborative process reflecting about two years of discussion, as I had said earlier, outreach and co-operation among the province, First Nation groups, the resource industry, scientists, environmental groups and the public.

In 2008, the Ministry of Natural Resources began talks with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation through the Oski-Machiitawin land use planning technical table to develop principles and processes to guide Far North land use planning. The ministry has also sought advice from six tribal councils and 31 Far North First Nations communities and will continue to do so. We have also met with many northern mayors and councils, industry and environmental groups.

As Minister Jeffrey has indicated, during the summer of 2009 we received input from First Nations, stakeholders and the public after first reading, and we have responded by tabling amendments to the bill in response to many of those concerns.

In October 2009, we put forward amendments to improve the bill, and during clause-by-clause we clarified that First Nations will initiate the planning process. We also clarified that First Nations will determine what areas are protected in their communities. We also clarified by adding that First Nations will be invited to work with us to contribute to the Far North land use strategy, including policies related to categories of land use, designation and protected areas.

We have listened to many of the concerns that were brought forward and incorporated those in this framework, and we will continue to do so over the coming consultations.

There is no question that the Far North is a priceless natural asset for all Ontarians. It cleans our air, protects our precious biodiversity and provides essential habitat for some of our most vulnerable species. Its untapped natural resources represent tremendous potential to provide economic benefits to the people of the Far North and all Ontarians.

With this bill that is before the House today, Ontario is poised to embark on an unprecedented land use planning initiative with First Nations in the Far North. If passed, this bold and forward-thinking legislation would contribute to a new era of long-term economic sustainability in the Far North and help ensure that Ontario remains a world leader in boreal conservation and biodiversity protection.

I'm very pleased on behalf of the minister and our government to be speaking to Bill 191 today, the Far North Act.

I had the opportunity to visit several communities in the Far North. I think of the opportunity I had to visit the De Beers diamond mine off the coast of James Bay and talk to some of the First Nation community representatives who were benefiting from the skills training in partnership with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry—to be able to work with First Nation communities, partner with them, to see them excited about the economic opportunities and the prosperity being able to be brought to their communities with the support of our government for education opportunities and training opportunities, so that First Nation communities in the Far North can play a greater role in the economic wealth of this province and in the enhancement of the quality of life in their own communities.

So I think there is a tremendous potential here in this legislation for us to do, really, what is set out, which is to help clarify, in partnership with First Nations, the land use planning process, as well as to provide the tools and the resources so that First Nation communities can initiate this process, bring that plan forward and ensure that we have responsible, sustainable economic development in the Far North for generations to come.

So, on behalf of the minister, I'm very pleased today that we are discussing this piece of legislation. I want to encourage members opposite to support this legislation and recognize that this is something we need to move forward on. We can no longer ignore the opportunities that exist in the Far North. We can no longer ignore responsible land use planning and economic development planning.

I want to encourage my colleagues opposite to support this bill because it is so important to Ontario's economy and it's important to First Nations.

With that, Speaker, I will turn the floor over to my colleagues.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions.

Mr. Jim Wilson: On the advice of our critic and as a former Minister of Northern Development and Mines, I will not be supporting this legislation. Your consultation, particularly with native groups, is deplorable. I note, and my colleague just handed me a resolution put forward by Grand Chief Stan Beardy of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, NAN, indicating that 225,000 square kilometres of the land you're setting aside for non-development in the north affects their land, NAN lands, and asking the committee that examined this legislation to abandon the bill, to withdraw the bill.

1710

Since the Premier first made this announcement last July, the government has not openly discussed this legislation, the Far North strategy, with other groups. Such principal stakeholder groups as the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the Ontario Fur Managers Federation and other outdoor organizations were not consulted and were not aware of the details of this bill. The groups were also excluded from participation in the government's Far North Advisory Council to provide input and direction on the strategy. Interestingly, the only group that was both advised of this

legislation and consulted ahead of time was the World Wildlife Fund.

Again, First Nations are opposed to this legislation. I recall that in the 2003 and 2007 elections you promised great things to First Nations. You were going to wipe the slate clean in terms of First Nations government relations, you were going to recognize their treaty rights and you were going to move forward. As far as I can tell, this is a huge step backward. You have not moved forward, you have not settled any treaties and you have not lived up to your campaign commitments whatsoever.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions?

Mr. Peter Kormos: I can tell you that New Democrats are very, very concerned about this legislation, its implications and, I suppose, the history, or lack of history, that led to this legislation being presented to this House and being debated for second reading today.

I tell you that you that our member of the NDP from Timmins-James Bay, Gilles Bisson, will be addressing the bill in due course, when our opportunity happens, by way of the lead commentary for New Democrats. Howard Hampton, the member for Kenora-Rainy River, also has a strong interest in these matters and will be speaking to the extent available to him, as will France Gélinas from Nickel Belt. All three are northern members who have, over the course not just of their political careers but of their lives in northern Ontario, acquired an acute sensitivity to the special needs of the north and an acute sensitivity to the need for respect for First Nations communities. As the Speaker has been told, and I'm sure will be told frequently over the course of second reading debate—which of course is but debate in principle but one which, from the New Democrats, will result in a strong focus on the needs of the north and not just the needs but the rights of aboriginal communities, First Nations communities—NAN First Nation does not support the process of this bill. Indeed, it is one of those bills where we all might have been better off had the government put it out to a committee process after first reading. I recall making that suggestion to the government House leader in a House leaders' meeting, and that proposal on the part of New Democrats was declined.

My concern is that the government is simply not only travelling where it remains in the dark, but that it is ignoring some important constitutional and inherent rights—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments and questions?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's a pleasure to make some comments on the minister's and the parliamentary assistant's speeches on Bill 191 and what it means for the Far North.

I think what we're not talking about here is the time it has taken to do some planning on a big piece of Ontario with a huge amount of resources that is virtually undeveloped. I know it has happened to me a number of times, Madam Speaker, and I'm sure it has happened to you and other members, that as we travel through this province, even on the 401 across the city of Toronto,

sometimes we make comments: "Where were they when they were planning this?" In earlier times, there wasn't a lot of planning, and unfortunately you cannot turn back the clock. We have to live and work around those decisions.

In this case, with Bill 191, the Premier first made a commitment in June 2008 to protect the boreal forest and also develop those parts of that vast area in a way that

was very, very inclusive.

Yes, it would be foolish to say that everything is addressed, that everything is in accordance with everybody, all the First Nations and other people of northern Ontario, but this is why we're going through this process. We recognize the potential, we recognize an opportunity to do some really good long-term planning for that part of the province, which actually will impact the whole province.

Yes, we're not there; yes, we hear the member opposite that there may be some issues, but that's why we're debating here in the House. That's why the commitment to take it out on committee was made. We look forward

to those results.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further

comments and questions?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Bill 191 is back for debate, and of course, Bill 191 is the reason why this Liberal government was called Canada's worst government by the Financial Post.

Listen to the nonsense over there. We heard that this was their commitment to work with the First Nations. Well, their commitment to working with the First Nations has resulted in resolution 10/22 from NAN, which says to this Liberal government, "Keep off our land, get rid of this Bill 191, get back to the table and do your job." Do your job of working with them. This resolution was dated April 1 of this year. So much for the minister's rhetoric about amendments and working with the First Nations. There's the result: a resolution by NAN First Nations that you defer and get rid of Bill 191, the bill that makes this government Canada's worst government ever.

We've heard from people all over that Bill 191, this super-park bill of the Liberals, is going to destroy any opportunity for prosperity in the north. It takes away a quarter of a million square kilometres of land, and we don't even know what's up there. Actually, I requested from the Ministry of Natural Resources a map of crown lands in the north, and guess what? That big monster bureaucracy couldn't even give us a map of what the crown owns in northern Ontario. And here they are going

to wipe off half of it-

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The minister has two minutes to respond.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I appreciate the comments from the members from Simcoe-Grey, Welland, Northumberland-Quinte West and Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. Some comments were quite helpful and some were misguided. Clearly, there are some facts that haven't been on the table.

Our government remains committed to working with First Nations in the Far North. It's important to note that

individual communities remain very interested in land use planning and Bill 191—so interested, in fact, that we had 33 out of 34 Far North First Nation communities participating in the land use planning workshops we held in Thunder Bay. I don't think you would have had that much uptake from the First Nations community unless they were interested and engaged. In any of the communities that I visited, the chiefs were finding how they could get engaged and what the process was. They want development. They want to manage it, they want to do it thoughtfully and carefully, and I have heard nothing but positive responses from the First Nations communities. Certainly, their leadership is engaged and wants to be participatory.

We have a great plan to work with the First Nations. We listened the first time we went out, and we certainly are receptive to talking about any other amendments the opposition wants to put forward that will make this legislation stronger. We have one chance to get this right for the past, the present and the future. Our First Nations are an extraordinarily important partner—and as well, our northern communities. The northern mayors and my colleagues on this side of the House who represent the north have been very vocal and very proactive in trying to make sure that this legislation represents their

community and will do a good job in the future.

I'm looking forward to sending the bill out for consultation, and I look forward to constructive, thoughtful recommendations from the opposition on how to make the bill better and being part of a positive process.

1720

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: First of all, I want to make notice that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

Certainly, as I stated in Chapleau, I've had the privilege and honour to be in Fort Severn, which is Ontario's most northern community. It's where Hudson Bay, Manitoba and Ontario come together. I've been to Peawanuck, Moosonee, Sioux Lookout and Pickle Lake, but I really don't know anything about the north.

The conversation I had with a member from the third party about an individual going up north—my suggestion is that any individual in this Legislature should see the entire province and see it in its intensity, because certainly the province of Ontario is something that is so vast and huge that many of us forget many of the aspects that take place on a day-to-day basis in other parts of the province. We take so many things for granted here in southern Ontario, that the north is such a jewel that needs to be protected, and anything that's done needs to be done the correct way and is something that we need to move forward with.

My remarks are going to be such that I'm going to try and comment on the minister's and the PA's comments in the fashion or the words that they brought out, and then move into the base of the contents of my concerns with the bill.

It was good to hear that the minister spoke about roads and hydro and infrastructure development, because during the committee process, one of the key concerns that I brought out was that the new 225,000-square-hectare protected area runs from Quebec to Manitoba, and the difficulty in that is that it has to be continuous.

Having had the privilege and honour to be minister for a while, you certainly know the difficulty there is in moving roads, for example. I recall one area where one company had access or had private land, but had to go through an old road that was opened in a provincial park before, but was denied now because the new individuals or the mindset within the ministry was that there was no access. So, if you're going to move a large piece of protected area from Quebec to Manitoba, it's certainly going to be very difficult to ensure that there is access through southern Ontario.

What's going to take place in Hearst, for example? Many members may not know that one of the busiest times of the year in Hearst is during the snowmobiling season. They have a run that runs right up to James Bay. They bring trains up where individuals get off the train with their snow machines and sled throughout Hearst.

How are you going to go through a protected area under the defined definitions of the protected areas now when it goes from Quebec to Manitoba? You're going to have to find some way to get through there. There's going to have to be permitting. Who's going to protect it or who's going to enforce all these aspects of what they're trying to move forward with?

It has to be probably a new definition of a park or a protected area. For those who don't know—and many don't. I'm not sure individuals know what the definition of a protected area is. The actual definition of a protected area by the world standard is that there is no commercial forestry, no new mining and no new hydro development within those areas.

The difficulty is that some of the areas that we have now protected don't allow for hydro lines to go through. They don't allow for roads to go through or snowmobiling and cases like that. But having the minister mention that certainly means that individuals within the ministry are starting to look at that.

The next aspect to mention was economic development. I know there was a very strong concern that in the legislation—I'll get to that later on in my debate—the economic development has to benefit the community, for the sole benefit of the community. So, for example, in the diamond mine in Attawapiskat, who is the net benefactor for that mine? Is it not the mine owners or is it the community? The concern then comes forward that when you're making decisions on who is going to be the net benefactor, is it the individuals who are investing or is it just the sole community? The concern with that was regarding hydro or energy generation. There is a large potential in a lot of these areas for energy generation which could be transmitted throughout southern Ontario and through other parts of North America; predominantly the Midwest states is a key area that could receive a lot of this. But would they be the net benefactor because they're the ones they're selling the energy to, or would it be the local community? We need to make sure that that's been looked at.

Protecting the boreal: We constantly hear this, but what's happening now is not protecting it. Virtually, access to these areas is very limited. You have winter roads—I'm sure a lot of people watching would know and have seen the ice road trucker show; there's a staging area at Pickle Lake to take things north. How are you going to protect those areas or get access to them? A lot of individuals would fly in or they would come in through the wintertime or try to access various areas. But protecting those areas—yes, they need to have some level of concern and protection, but there is a lot of legislation out there that ensures that these areas are protected and managed in a proper fashion; whether it's forestry or mining, there's certainly a lot of compliance that needs to take place.

So to come forward and say we're going to protect the boreal—I should quote one thing that the founder of Greenpeace very specifically stated after he left Greenpeace; he came to realize that "so long as the forest has value, it will continue to be a forest." For those who don't realize it, in a lot of Central America and South America, where the forest is being completely eliminated, it's because the forest has no value. The value in those properties is in farmland. So as long as the forest has value, it will continue to be a forest. Quite frankly, foresters are the ones who want to make sure that there is enough fibre or wood flow to make sure their business continues a regular basis. So we need to make sure that allowing those in the forestry and mining sectors to continue on, in proper fashions that will benefit a lot of communities in the north, actually takes place.

The next aspect I wanted to talk about was an area where they talk about the consultations with the First Nation. They spoke about eight different planning areas that were currently in place, but the difficulty is that in a lot of these areas, there are non-treaty or non-status First Nations communities who are still living off the land. There's no provision there to say that those individuals will be included with that process in any way, shape or form at all.

Many members may not realize, but I work quite a bit with Grand Chief Stan Beardy in trying to help curb youth suicide. A lot of the First Nations communities I deal with are not treaty First Nations communities. We try to give the kids some focus, some sports equipment, on a regular basis, and we've been able to send up a transport truckload to try to help youth in the north, to give them another focus in life.

The difficulty here, when we're talking about what's taking place—and the only reason I mention that is because you have to have a sense of what goes on in order to help out and find ways to assist; we've tried to reach out in many aspects—is that there are a lot of First Nations communities up there that are not necessarily signatories of Treaty 5 or Treaty 9, all of which are

governed by the Nishnawbe Aski First Nation community. Grand Chief Stan Beardy is doing a great job, but we want to make sure that all of those communities are included in what's actually taking place there.

The government, the minister and the PA talked at great length about the great working relationships. I want to read you a document that I have received that was just passed, actually, on May 5; it's from Nishnawbe Aski, and it reads as follows:

"To begin my communication with you, I would like to start off by saying that First Nations and Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) have a say on what happens on their homelands, and that anything that may happen on their homelands requires their free, prior and informed consent.

"First Nations want to secure economic opportunities for their communities and future generations and also have a responsibility to the Creator for the care of the land. First Nations have always determined their use of the land and will continue to do so.

"Bill 191 conflicts with these principles and approach to the land. Therefore, I have been asked by the First Nations in Nishnawbe Aski Nation to send you the following message:

"As Bill 191 continues to be considered for second reading in session 2 of Parliament 39 in the Ontario Legislative Assembly, the First Nations in NAN would like to remind you and other members of Parliament that they oppose the bill as it is currently written.

"NAN First Nations have been consistent in their opposition to the bill since it was first read and carried on June 2, 2009. NAN First Nations continue to oppose the bill, even though the Standing Committee on General Government reviewed it and made amendments on October 22, 2009.

"The NAN First Nations have passed Resolution 10/22, demanding that the bill be deferred until:

"(1) The government of Ontario and NAN First Nations agree on a process for consultation and accommodation; and

"(2) The government of Ontario obtains their free, prior and informed consent.

"NAN's position is that these unaddressed issues alone should prevent its passage. The NAN First Nations continue to oppose the bill as it is written since a number of First Nations proposed to put forth the amendments and have gone unheeded.

"NAN First Nations will not provide their free, prior and informed consent until these concerns have been addressed."

As a result of the inability of the government to stand and to work with the First Nations, I would ask that we move forward with an adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Oshawa has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye." All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1731 to 1801.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): All those in favour, please rise and be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please rise and be counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 9; the nays are 37.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

BREASTFEEDING ALLAITEMENT MATERNEL

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nickel Belt has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Health Promotion last Wednesday concerning breastfeeding.

The member for Nickel Belt has up to five minutes to pose her question.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Last week, for the eighth time in a row, I asked the Minister of Health Promotion point-blank if she will adopt a province-wide breastfeeding strategy for Ontario. I had left nothing to chance. I had taken the report and put a copy on every single MPP's desk. I had organized a press conference and informed her office that we would be launching this report. When I asked the question, "Will you adopt the report?" I got an answer as if I was coming from left field, when she, her ministry and everybody else in this House knew this was coming. I had put a copy of the report on everybody's desk. Lots of MPPs came and talked to me about the importance of a breastfeeding strategy for Ontario. The lead ministry for this is the Ministry of Health Promotion, and she acted as if she was surprised.

The recommendation for a provincial breastfeeding strategy highlights the benefits of breastfeeding, and it outlines the necessary steps the government must take to ensure that more of Ontario's children are given the opportunity to breastfeed. That's all.

The report costs next to nothing to the government. The strategy pays huge dividends. It is supported by a coalition of virtually all the stakeholders on this issue, from breastfeeding committees to the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario to lactation consultants, breastfeeding clinics, public health units, midwives, hospitals, pediatricians, and the list goes on and on.

This report was written independently of the government by groups and individuals who truly recognize the importance of breastfeeding. They know that mothers and families in Ontario need help and support to take action, and they did. They wrote a report that was well researched, well documented and, most of all, very logical. Here is, step by step, what a breastfeeding strategy could look like in Ontario.

To me, the answer to my question should have been a resounding yes, that Ontario will move and adopt a breastfeeding strategy. Instead, I feel that my question was not answered. Instead, it only highlighted the government's continued reluctance to address this issue and make changes for the people of Ontario.

The minister stated in her answer that she understands the importance of breastfeeding to healthy children and healthy moms. She stated that her ministry is supporting parents through resources and support phone lines, but this was not what I asked. I asked if she would support an Ontario-wide breastfeeding strategy.

In my supplementary, I again tried to demonstrate the importance of this issue and the desperate need for the government to take action to support moms to breastfeed. You all know by now—you got my report—that 90% of mums initiate breastfeeding, but only 15% of them succeed to six months.

This is not an issue that can be changed by a minister who "urges" mothers to breastfeed. It requires a minister who acts and supports moms so that they can breastfeed.

While most people can agree that breastfeeding is the best option for our children, moms do not have adequate support to successfully do this. The fact is that Ontario has a patchwork of services and very little support for organizations and individual practitioners who are dedicated to supporting breastfeeding.

Without a strong policy and programming framework, we see formula companies continuing to push their products on new moms with packaged samples and coupons for all sorts of formula products.

I'm not against formula. It has a role to play for those children who cannot be breastfed or for moms who decide that breastfeeding is not for them. But when you see the aggressive marketing campaigns to moms who want to breastfeed, who are struggling to succeed in this natural occurrence—it's not easy when you see what's happening. You need a Minister of Health who answers, "Yes, we need an Ontario-wide breastfeeding strategy."

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell has five minutes to respond.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je tiens à remercier la représentante ou la députée de Nickel Belt pour sa question. Je dois dire que l'Ontario est choyée, vraiment, d'avoir une personne de ce genre qui siège à l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie. Elle joue un rôle important par sa présence au réseau des femmes de l'APF. Le réseau des femmes de l'APF comprend 76 pays et gouvernements.

Healthy relationships between mothers and children are essential in building strong communities. Breastfeeding is a fundamental part of the development of this relationship between mother and child. We support mothers who are breastfeeding. It is important for mothers who are breastfeeding to have the best information and the best supports. This is why, through Ontario's 36 public health units, the government provides funding for breastfeeding supports and services, including parent information and support phone lines, breastfeeding resource materials and website postings, prenatal classes, breastfeeding clinics and and the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program. We in the Ministry of Health Promotion understand the importance of developing supportive environments for breastfeeding infants and their mothers.

1810

In December 2009, a report called Recommendations for a Provincial Breastfeeding Strategy for Ontario was developed by a collaboration of organizations. I would like to thank the 19 organizations and individuals who have worked on this report. We are looking at the report and will take its recommendations into consideration as we move forward with improving breastfeeding supports in the province.

To better understand the extent of breastfeeding supports and services in the community, the Ministry of Health Promotion initiated a survey of all 36 provincial health units. The results are currently under review with our partners in the survey. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care conducted a similar survey of hospital supports. The results will help us develop new policies and practices to increase support for breastfeeding, and we look forward to completing that review soon.

LABOUR DISPUTE

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nickel Belt has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question to the Premier last Wednesday concerning replacement workers. You have up to five minutes to make your comments.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm before you right now because I was dissatisfied with the answer that I received during question period last week from our Premier when I asked, "Will your government commit to anti-scab legislation for Ontario?"

Over the last several months, I have spent a fair amount of time reading different papers on the effect on labour relations when replacement workers are used, as well as when laws are put into place to ban the use of replacement workers. I also spent quite a bit of time reading through debates in this House on the subject over the last 20 years. I've got to say that there's anything but clarity in the position of the Liberal caucus on this issue.

Look at the record: When the NDP brought in the law banning the use of replacement workers, the Liberals voted against it. When Mike Harris abolished the antireplacement-workers law so that replacement workers are now legal in Ontario, the Liberals voted against that, too. So they voted against the bill coming in, but they voted against the bill being repealed. The Liberals voted against anti-replacement-worker legislation in 1992. Then they voted against repealing it in 1995. Last fall, we voted on my and my colleague from Welland's anti-replacement workers private members' bill in second reading. All but one MPP present in the House voted against it—Liberals, that is.

So Madam Speaker, you can understand my confusion when I asked if Liberals would support a law banning replacement workers in Ontario and yet again I witnessed what I would call a cryptic answer from the Premier. Instead of answering the question, whether we would move forward with anti-replacement-worker legislation, he said that he is committed to a negotiated settlement.

Anti-replacement-worker legislation is not new. It used to be the law in Ontario, and it has been the law in Quebec since the 1970s and in BC since the 1990s, and unlike Ontario, successive governments in those two provinces have not done away with the anti-replacement-worker legislation. Why is that? The Liberal government in BC could have taken it away, and the same thing with Quebec, but they are keeping it because it works. Labour disputes are shorter, as the focus of negotiations is not on managing the replacement workers on the part of the employees and opposing it on the part of the union. It focuses the negotiations on what the points are that brought about this labour dispute.

Let me quote from a paper entitled The Effects of the Use of Striker Replacement Workers in Canada: An Analysis of Four Cases, authored by Parbudyal Singh, Deborah Zinni and Harish Jain: "The use of replacements also leads to longer strikes.... Among the consequences of using replacements are more antagonistic union-management relationships and possibly longer strikes. Policy-makers should consider these consequences when debating or considering striker-replacement laws in North America."

Let me quote from a paper entitled A Federal Anti-Scab Law for Canada? The Debate Over Bill C-257, by Larry Savage, assistant professor, and Jonah Butovsky, associate professor, both at Brock University:

"In the short period time of in which anti-scab legislation was in effect in Ontario, investment and employment actually increased substantially....

"The fact that anti-scab laws continue to enjoy broad support from politicians across the political spectrum" in British Columbia and Quebec "goes a long way to diffuse the argument that a ban on replacement workers would cripple economic growth and drive away business, jobs and investment."

I could go on—but I don't have enough time—and quote from many more papers published on the subject that point to the same direction. It does not drive business away or investment away. What it does is it tears at the social fabric of a community. It inflicts wounds on its people, its families and its community that take generations to heal.

I can speak of what's going on in Sudbury right now. Vale Inco and the Steelworkers have been on strike for over 10 months. It is legal in Ontario to use replacement workers, and replacement workers are used. It is tearing my community apart.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Timiskaming—Cochrane has up to five minutes to respond.

Mr. David Ramsay: I welcome this opportunity to respond.

Our government is very conscious of the effect this labour dispute is having on the whole community of Sudbury. We have all seen and heard how frustrating and emotional this process has been for all the parties. Minister Bartolucci has shared many stories about the hardships faced by the dedicated workers and their families, and I want to commend the member for Sudbury for working very tirelessly on behalf of his constituents.

As the Premier has said, the best thing that we can do at this point is to focus on getting the parties back to the bargaining table. We urge the parties to find some common ground so they can ultimately resolve this dispute.

I understand that the parties have briefly met with senior mediator Mr. Kevin Burkett. While we're all very anxious for resolution, a lasting agreement between Vale Inco and the Steelworkers will only be reached once they determine how they can resolve those differences, and that's where this government's energy is focused. We are working hard to support the two parties in the negotiating process.

It is well known that agreements reached by the parties at the bargaining table are the most stable and the most productive.

In terms of the debate over replacement workers, what I want to reiterate to the member from Nickel Belt is that our government's energy at this time is focused on the parties setting aside their differences and sitting back down at the bargaining table. That's the only way this dispute will be resolved. We will continue to offer whatever assistance is necessary to help the parties reach a deal and put an end to this dispute.

I also want to remind the member from Nickel Belt of our government's labour relations record since we took office six and a half years ago. We have built a system in this province that we can be very proud of. In 2005, we restored fairness and balance to the province's labour relations system through the Labour Relations Amendment Act. The number of work stoppages is now the lowest it has been in over 30 years. Furthermore, over the past few years, approximately 97% of negotiations have resulted in settlements with no work stoppages. That translates to almost 2,000 settlements reached each year in Ontario without a strike or lockout. This excellent record is in large part thanks to our emphasis on the collective bargaining process.

We also assist parties throughout this process with our dedicated and highly skilled Ministry of Labour mediation team, who have had a great deal of experience in assisting even the most difficult and challenging labour disputes. This mediation team is standing by and ready to help the parties involved in this dispute whenever they are ready to resume talks.

Ultimately, though, I must remind everyone that it remains the company's and the union's joint responsibility to sort out their differences in order to put an end to this dispute. I will reiterate that this dispute can only be resolved at the bargaining table.

1820

I urge both Vale Inco and the union to think about their respective positions and to focus on the hard decisions that have to be made before a settlement can be reached.

We understand that bargaining can be difficult and stressful, but like everyone in Sudbury, we're all extremely hopeful that the two sides can find a way to resolve this dispute. We urge them to start talking with each other again as soon as possible and find a negotiated solution at the bargaining table. We know that, in the end, the will is there to end this dispute.

INFRASTRUCTURE HEALTH AND SAFETY ASSOCIATION

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Premier concerning the Infrastructure Health and Safety Association. You have up to five minutes.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'd like to ask the people of this province, as well as the people in this House, what is a member to do when he asks a question that is based on facts, based on documented evidence, and the Premier's response contradicts and is not consistent with the facts and evidence? That is why we're having this further question tonight.

I suggested in the House—and I think it's good, sage advice for everybody—that old Mark Twain saying that when we are in doubt, we ought to always tell the truth. This question arises out of the IHSA. I asked the Premier directly why Pat Dillon, who is not appointed to the IHSA, but is head of the Working Families Coalition, was making appointments to the IHSA in conjunction with the chair of that IHSA, Michael Delisle.

Let me read from a letter from the Christian Labour Association of Canada, CLAC: "We discovered that a private ... meeting had been scheduled by IHSA for the" Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario "affiliated unions. No notice of this meeting was sent to CLAC, nor were we advised that the nomination meeting had become a management side only meeting. We were advised that we would not be welcome at the labour meeting; all spots were to be determined by the BCTC affiliates." That's headed up by Pat Dillon as well.

There seems to be some confusion here between the government and its agencies. The Premier says that Pat Dillon doesn't select the labour representatives on government boards, and when I asked him why Pat

Dillon is in charge of selecting labour representatives, flippantly he said, "He's not."

First of all, I should say that the Premier has appointed Pat Dillon to the College of Trades. That's what Mr. Dillon was doing here in the Legislature today, this morning, when he was at the government agencies committee. In our committee hearings, Pat Dillon gave this description of his new appointed role: "The appointments council will be not only acting as the transition board but as the appointments council, preparing names to put forward for the governing board, the industry board and the trade board."

It seems to me that Mr. McGuinty is not only well aware of this fact that he's selecting labour representatives at the College of Trades, but he thinks it should be happening more. He's appointing to a new committee every year.

The appointments council of the College of Trades exists for only one thing: to select representatives for various boards within the College of Trades. So I'm a little bit confused here when I hear the Premier say that Pat Dillon doesn't select labour representatives in the province of Ontario.

But what's confusing me even more was the report that I received of Mr. Dillon's private meeting with IHSA CEO Michael Delisle. It's confused me because Pat Dillon isn't an impartial arbiter of labour relations in this province. Pat Dillon represents the Working Families Coalition. Pat Dillon is a member of the Building and Construction Trades Council, which of course has been very supportive of the Liberal Party of Ontario.

So here we have Pat Dillon saying that his job is to appoint people; we have the Premier saying he's not. So why does the Premier say that Pat Dillon isn't selecting labour representatives, even though he put him on the appointments council of the College of Trades with that mandate? Why is Pat Dillon selecting labour representatives to another agency, the IHSA, without the mandate to do so? Most importantly, as well, why is he excluding the CLAC membership? Is this because CLAC is not part of the Working Families Coalition that Pat Dillon heads up as well?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Timiskaming—Cochrane has up to five minutes to respond.

Mr. David Ramsay: I'm very sorry that the member is so confused about this, and I hope through this process we can elicit some clarity for the member.

The Ministry of Labour and our partners understand and support one common belief, and that is that work-place safety is everyone's responsibility, including Pat Dillon's. The strength of our system is based on broad participation by many organizations, including Work-place Safety and Insurance Board employers, employees, and health and safety associations. Health and safety associations are independent bodies funded by WSIB.

This past January, the Construction Safety Association of Ontario has amalgamated with the Electrical and Utilities Safety Association and the Transportation

Health and Safety Association of Ontario. The new organization is called the Infrastructure Health and Safety Association, or IHSA.

There are six different committees under the IHSA. In February, letters were sent out to all of the stakeholders asking for nominations and participation in the nomination process for the six committees. Furthermore, many different stakeholders, including Mr. Dillon, were invited to meetings to provide advice based on their specific expertise relating to the six different advisory councils, as well as their advice and input into the nominations for the governance board.

The member would like this House to believe that the membership of the IHSA is somehow picked unilaterally. That would be further from the truth. As the member well knows, the membership of the board is determined by an independent nomination committee which includes a cross-section of industry stakeholders. The committee is seeking consensus to ensure full representation of different groups and regions in Ontario. The names of union, non-union and employer representatives have been solicited and received for consideration. At this stage, the boards have not yet been established and no selections have been made.

In his question to the Premier this morning, the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington referenced a meeting on March 26 chaired by the IHSA CEO, Michael Delisle. This meeting was for the nomination of the heavy civil and aggregates advisory council. In attendance was the Christian Labour Association of Canada, which was one of the many different unions invited to be part of the nomination process.

As you can see, the IHSA board selection process has been fully transparent and has solicited the participation of all of the partners concerned with the health and safety of our workers. It goes without saying that all of us in the labour sector are working towards the same goal of safer workplaces in the province of Ontario. The McGuinty government is proud of our record on worker health and safety, and we are continuing with our efforts to prevent workplace incidents from occurring. Since taking office six and a half years ago, we've doubled the number of inspectors in the field, this in stark contrast to when the party of the member opposite was in power, when they fired water and food inspectors.

Our government has also launched a Safe at Work Ontario strategy and has conducted 17 proactive and targeted blitzes in our province's work sites. As a result of these efforts, we have decreased the lost-time injury rate by over 30% and dramatically decreased the number of fatalities since taking over from the previous government. And, I'm proud to say, we're always striving to do better. That is why the Ministry of Labour has put together a panel of industry experts to conduct a comprehensive review of Ontario's occupational health and safety prevention and enforcement system. This expert advisory panel will look at the range of issues, including the entry-level safety training, the impact of the underground economy on health and safety practices, and how existing legislation services worker safety.

As you can see, the McGuinty government is working hard in collaboration with many different groups, to protect our workers so that we can assure that they can return home every night safe.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 6:45 p.m. The House recessed from 1830 to 1845. Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South-Weston / York-Sud- Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington-Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering-Scarborough East / Pickering-Scarborough-Est	- opposition officials
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia-Lambton	
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Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough Sud-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margarett R. (LIB)	Scarborough-Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la sant
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	Names of Treath Fromotion / Names te de la Fromotion de la sant
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
		Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma-Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
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Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
		Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga-Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax-Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale-High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor-Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil of gestion du gouvernement

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Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby-Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / Thunder Bay-Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora-Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham-Kent-Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West-Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest-Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges-Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton-Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin-Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket-Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea-Gore-Malton	
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Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean-Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity-Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
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McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa-Orléans	
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		Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
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Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
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maps, man, E none doily (E1D)	Scarolough Agmeourt	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches-East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	**
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London-Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland-Ouinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)		Minister of Interconsumental Afficient / Minister des Afficien
Smith, Holl. / L. Holl. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	Government Frouse Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga-Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth-Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott

Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones

Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals Maria Van Bommel

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial



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Second Session, 39th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 39^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 18 May 2010



Mardi 18 mai 2010



Speaker Honourable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 18 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 18 mai 2010

The House recessed from 1830 to 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LES ORGANISATIONS SANS BUT LUCRATIF

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 17, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-for-profit corporations / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les organisations sans but lucratif.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further

debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'étais pour dire merci, madame la Présidente, mais je ne suis pas si sûre que c'est ça que je veux dire.

Le projet de loi 65, la loi modifiant les organismes à but non lucratif—je dois dire que j'ai 25 années d'expérience à travailler avec les organismes à but non lucratif, et je serais parfaitement d'accord pour dire que, oui, la loi a besoin d'être modifiée.

Un organisme à but non lucratif en Ontario est dirigé—la gouvernance est dirigée par un conseil d'administration. Les conseils d'administration sont élus par les membres qui font partie de la corporation. Pour vous donner un exemple, au centre de santé communautaire où je travaillais les cartes de membre étaient de 5 \$; donc, n'importe qui dans la communauté pouvait devenir membre en payant sa carte de membre de 5 \$. En devenant membre, ça leur donnait le droit de vote pour l'assemblée générale annuelle pour élire les gens qui siègent au conseil d'administration.

Le conseil d'administration est ce qu'on appelle en français « l'organe suprême ». C'est un drôle de mot qui veut dire que ce sont eux qui sont en charge, ce sont eux qui font la gouvernance et ce sont eux qui donnent les objectifs stratégiques de l'organisme à but non lucratif. C'est ce qu'on va appeler une « personne morale ».

I have one second to have a page bring me a glass of

water, please.

Donc, je reviens à ma personne morale. Les membres de la corporation élisent les membres du conseil d'administration. Les membres du conseil d'administration sont la personne morale; ce sont eux qui représentent la communauté.

On dit que ces bénévoles-là sont des bénévoles mandataires fiduciaires; non seulement ils sont élus et ils exercent leur fonction de façon bénévole, mais ces personnes-là ont une responsabilité fiscale. Ça veut dire que, lorsque le gouvernement fait un transfert de fonds, le transfert de fonds se fait à la personne morale; il se fait aux personnes qui sont au conseil d'administration de cette agence-là.

1850

De là, ils vont déléguer leurs pouvoirs au directeur ou à la directrice générale; parfois, appelé un président il est directeur général, mais en général, on va parler de direction générale. La direction générale, c'est elle, cette personne-là, qui va diriger toute l'équipe—les employés, la dépense des budgets, etc. En général, les personnes morales—les personnes en charge d'une corporation, le conseil d'administration—vont se réunir une fois par mois et vont avoir un agenda d'éléments pertinents à l'orientation stratégique de leur organisme à but non lucratif.

Donc, si tu compares ça un peu avec un organisme privé—un organisme privé, ça peut être moi, ou n'importe qui d'autre, qui décide de se lancer en affaires. C'est moi qui prend les risques; c'est moi qui prend les décisions; c'est moi qui décide. Dans un organisme à but non lucratif, ça ne se passe pas comme ça. Ce n'est pas le directeur général qui a le mot final, c'est le conseil d'administration. Donc, le conseil d'administration a non seulement des responsabilités, mais il a également un pouvoir d'autorité.

Le gouvernement transfère des fonds pour la mission de l'organisme. Une des premières choses que le conseil d'administration aura à faire sera de développer quelles seront la mission, la vision et les orientations stratégiques. Une fois que ces dernières sont mises en place, ils vont déléguer au directeur ou à la directrice générale les fonctions de mettre ça en place.

Pour le mettre en place, ils vont également donner des balises. C'est-à-dire que dans l'exercice de ses fonctions, le directeur ou la directrice générale aura le droit de faire certaines choses, mais ses pouvoirs seront limités. Ils auront le droit de prendre certaines décisions, mais pour d'autres décisions, ils devront aller consulter le conseil d'administration.

Donc, pour le directeur ou la directrice générale, cette personne-là voit son patron une fois par mois lors de la réunion du conseil d'administration. Lorsqu'elle voit son patron, lorsqu'il y a une réunion du conseil d'administration, le conseil d'administration doit être capable de déléguer et de faire confiance. S'il y a un bris de confiance qui se passe entre le conseil d'administration et le directeur ou la directrice générale, on va avoir des problèmes, et on va souvent avoir des problèmes sérieux, parce que comme organisme à but non lucratif dirigé par un conseil d'administration, ces bénévoles-là, ces mandataires fiduciaires-là, ne sont pas toujours là. La plupart du temps, au jour le jour, lorsque les activités se déroulent. ces gens-là ne sont pas là. Donc, ils doivent être capables d'avoir confiance en la personne à qui ils vont déléguer les responsabilités, et ça veut dire que si ce lien de confiance n'est pas là, la gouvernance ne fonctionnera pas bien. Moi, je dis à ces organismes à but non lucratif: « Si vous avez perdu confiance en votre directeur général ou votre directrice générale, c'est le temps d'en embaucher un autre; allez vous chercher une autre personne en qui vous allez pouvoir avoir confiance et à qui vous allez pouvoir déléguer vos pouvoirs entre les réunions. »

Une autre chose qui est très importante est l'assemblée générale annuelle. À l'assemblée générale annuelle, il y aura toutes sortes de règles qui vont diriger ça. Ces règles-là, on peut les retrouver dans le projet de loi dont on parle aujourd'hui. Ces règles-là sont là pour s'assurer que tout est fait de façon transparente et que tout est fait de façon à être imputable à la communauté au travers des membres corporatifs.

Donc, il est important que, dans le projet de loi dont on parle aujourd'hui, le projet de loi 65—et je peux vous répéter le nom : Loi modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les organisations sans but lucratif ce soit bien défini.

À même les organismes francophones de l'Ontario. La plupart d'entre eux utilisent ce qu'on appelle le code Morin. C'est un code de procédures parlementaires qui décrit comment on ferait les choses—comment on fait pour apporter une proposition, comment on fait pour la modifier; quand qu'on vote sur un amendement : et si on a besoin de 50 % des voix ou de 75 % des voix. Ça, c'est le code parlementaire qui est décrit dans le code Morin.

Dans la plupart des organismes à but non lucratif du côté anglophone, ils vont utiliser ce qu'on appelle Robert's Rules of Order. C'est la même chose; c'est un code de procédures parlementaires qui va décrire comment une corporation doit gérer ses choses.

Donc, l'assemblée générale annuelle—on l'appelle « annuelle » parce qu'elle a lieu seulement une fois par année—va être appelée. Souvent, il faut faire une annonce dans les journaux pour être sûr que ce soit transparent, pour être sûr que n'importe qui voulant y participer a la chance de savoir que cette réunion-là a lieu et a la chance, également, de savoir quels seront les items à l'ordre du jour pour y arriver préparé. Les gens qui sont membres corporatifs auront le droit de vote, donc, si on décide de changer les statuts et règlements, c'est certainement quelque chose.

Une loi qui est modifiée dans le projet de loi, c'est comment les statuts corporatifs sont mis en place. C'est un processus légal qui avait tendance à être un petit peu difficile, mais maintenant, avec le nouveau projet de loi, ils vont rendre ce processus-là beaucoup plus facile. Ce qu'on appelle l'obtention de tes lettres patentes—donc, que tu t'enregistres, que le gouvernement te reconnaisse comme une agence à but non lucratif—était quelque chose de compliqué, de légal, pour lequel tu devais retenir les services d'un avocat. Il y avait également des frais reliés à ça.

Avec le nouveau projet de loi, on rend ça beaucoup plus facileoù il y a des espèces de gabarits qui peuvent être utilisés. Si tu es un organisme du milieu de la santé et des services sociaux, il y a un gabarit fait pour toi que tu peux utiliser et qui rend les choses plus faciles. Si tu es du côté de la justice—parce que les agences à but non lucratif, on en retrouve dans tous les secteurs de fonctionnement de notre société. Donc, peu importe, maintenant avec le nouveau projet de loi, tu auras des gabarits qui vont rendre le processus pour t'enregistrer comme un organisme à but non lucratif en Ontario beaucoup plus facile.

Donc, l'organisme reçoit ses lettres patentes, organise sa première assemblée générale annuelle, vend des cartes de membre; les membres corporatifs arrivent, revoient l'agenda et votent. Une des premières choses qu'ils auront à faire de mettre en place des statuts et règlements qui vont définir, entre autres, le nom de l'agence, le sceau; qui vont définir combien de membres seront à leur conseil d'administration, s'il y a un exécutif, quel code parlementaire ils décident d'utiliser, le code Morin ou Robert's Rules of Order—mais il y en a d'autres également. Donc, tout ça, ce sera dans leurs statuts et règlements.

Il y a différents types de gouvernance qui existent. Le modèle dont je suis en train de vous parler est un modèle qu'on appelle le type traditionnel. C'est-à-dire que tu auras un conseil d'administration avec un comité exécutif, et le comité exécutif, habituellement, est formé des membres—le président ou la présidente, le vice-président, le secrétaire, le trésorier. C'est pas mal standard pour former le comité exécutif.

Le conseil peut également décider de former d'autres comités. On peut penser souvent à un comité de prélèvement de fonds. Vous saurez très bien que les organismes à but nonlucratif en arrachent de ces temps-ci en Ontario.

On avait les aides à l'enfance qui étaient ici hier pour venir nous rencontrer. Je peux vous dire que l'aide à l'enfance de Sudbury a partagé avec moi des manques à gagner dans leur budget qui sont très significatifs, certainement, mais ils ne sont pas les seuls. Si tu regardes tous les autres organismes qui dépendent, en partie ou en totalité, de deniers publics pour offrir leurs services, ils se sont tous fait dire que ce sera un gel des revenus et des transferts de paiements qui va se faire du gouvernement envers eux.

Mais ça ne veut pas dire que—les conventions collectives qui ont été signées, il faut quand même qu'elles soient honorées, et cela veut souvent dire l'« escalation » des coûts de la main-d'œuvre quand les revenus restent à plat. Donc, c'est toujours la même chose : tu as des revenus qui n'augmentent pas pendant que tes dépenses continuent d'augmenter.

1900

Avec la taxe de vente harmonisée, on sait tous que le coût d'energie et d'électricité—tout ça va augmenter. Bien, toutes les agences à but non lucratif doivent payer pour ce genre de frais-là, donc, on sait que leurs coûts d'opération vont continuer d'augmenter.

Dans le nord de l'Ontario, les coûts de chauffage et d'électricité sont très hauts. On ajoute 8 % à ça avec la nouvelle taxe harmonisée. Ça va vouloir dire que les coûts d'opération des organismes à but non lucratif à la grandeur de la province vont augmenter, tandis que la province envoie un message que les revenus vont rester plats. Ce ne sont pas de bonnes nouvelles.

Moi, je suis au comité spécial pour la santé mentale, et des douzaines d'organismes qui offrent des services de santé mentale aux enfants sont venus nous voir pour dire que dans les 10 dernières années, ils n'ont eu qu'une seule augmentation de leur fonds d'opération—une augmentation de 3 % en 10 ans—tandis que les coûts d'opération ont augmenté de façon multiplicative.

Toutes les agences qui offrent des services de santé mentale aux enfants sont dans le même pétrin. Ce sont de bons organismes à but non lucratif qui sont bien gérés, avec une gouvernance qui fait bien son travail et avec des travailleurs qui ont le cœur à l'ouvrage et qui essaient bien fort de rendre les services désirés. Mais quand ta source de revenus est le gouvernement, et le gouvernement décide de ne pas augmenter ton budget, il y a des décisions difficiles qui doivent se prendre.

Ces décisions difficiles-là, c'est au niveau de la gouvernance que ca se fait; c'est au niveau du conseil d'administration. C'est pour ça que j'ai dit au tout début qu'on les appelle les mandataires fiduciaires. Savez-vous qu'avec le projet de loi qu'on a là, une personne qui est au conseil d'un organisme à but non lucratif est responsable personnellement des déficits que cette agence-là pourrait encourir? Cela veut dire que, malgré la bonne volonté de tout le monde, malgré que tout le monde ait mis l'épaule à la roue et qu'on ait essayé d'équilibrer le budget, si on se retrouve avec un budget déficitaire, avec notre projet de loi, ce sont les bénévoles, les mandataires fiduciaires, les membres du conseil d'administration, qui sont personnellement responsables de ce déficit. C'est une grosse responsabilité à mettre sur les épaules des bénévoles.

Je dois dire qu'au Canada, on n'a pas une histoire où le gouvernement a tendance à faire ça, mais le projet de loi rend quand même possible que le gouvernement demanderait de se faire rembourser à même les bénévoles, les mandataires fiduciaires, qui ont été élus au conseil d'administration. Donc, ce sont quand même des choses importantes à considérer.

Il y a souvent des organismes à but non lucratif qui ont de la difficulté à recruter des membres à leur conseil d'administration. C'est une responsabilité importante d'être mandataire fiduciaire, et puis quand on te rajoute des responsabilités comme ça, une responsabilité où tu es personnellement responsable des déficits de ton agence, ça fait réfléchir.

Je vous parlais de l'aide à l'enfance de Sudbury, qui, elle, regarde à 1,2 million de dollars de déficit d'opération cette année. S'il n'y a rien qui change, si leur budget n'augmente pas—ça, c'est seulement l'« escalation » des coûts d'opération reliée à leur convention collective. Donc, on peut voir que si une personne comme vous et moi, madame la Présidente, était au conseil d'administration de cette agence-là—on peut voir pourquoi c'est gens-là seraient un peu nerveux, avec bonne raison. Je pense qu'il n'y a aucun de nous autres qui aurait 1,2 million de dollars dans leur poche et qui serait prêt à repayer le gouvernement pour un manque à gagner, pour un programme qui est plus ou moins mandaté par le gouvernement.

Surtout quand on parle de l'aide à l'enfance, la plupart des services qu'ils offrent sont des services mandatés. Le gouvernement dit que si un enfant se retrouve en situation d'aide, vous devez répondre à l'appel, vous devez faire telle et telle évaluation, vous devez faire tel et tel suivi. Donc, c'est un peu une dichotomie que l'on retrouve là, où les gens se retrouvent responsables des services qui sont mandatés par le gouvernement et pas nécessairement des services qu'ils ont choisi d'offrir.

Ce n'est pas que les services d'aide à l'enfance que l'on a en ce moment ne soient pas adéquats; ce n'est pas ça que j'essaie de dire. J'essaie vraiment de démontrer que ce projet de loi-là qui touche aux agences à but non lucratif est un projet de loi sérieux, parce qu'on retrouve partout les agences à but non lucratif. Que tu parles d'une maison d'hébergement pour femmes violentées—la plupart du temps ce sont des agences à but non lucratif; si on regarde les centres de santé communautaires, les centres pour n'importe quelle sphère d'activité, on va y retrouver des agences à but non lucratif.

Il y a quelques semaines, on avait les services familiaux—family services—qui sont venus nous voir. Eux aussi fonctionnent comme agence à but non lucratif. Ils reçoivent leur budget, ou une partie de leur budget, du gouvernement; ils offrent une série de services à la population qu'ils desservent dans un secteur géographique; et ils sont dirigés par un conseil d'administration qui a aussi des membres corporatifs.

Donc, le projet de loi qu'on est en train de revoir ce soir, le projet de loi 65, aura des rebondissements dans toutes les sphères d'activité de notre société, et c'est un projet de loi qui est quand même important de par le fait que tellement d'organismes seront touchés.

J'encourage toute la population de l'Ontario à se mettre au courant de ce qui est contenu dans le projet de loi 65. C'est un projet de loi quand même assez volumineux; il y a plus de 109 pages, et cela aura un impact.

J'espère qu'on n'aura pas comme effet pervers que toutes les agences à but non lucratif auront à embaucher des avocats pour leur expliquer ce qu'il y a dans ce projet de loi-là. J'espère qu'on aura la chance d'avoir une version facile à comprendre et facile à interpréter pour toutes les agences à but non lucratif. Il y en a de très petites; si on parle des Grands Frères Grandes Sœurs, ce sont souvent des organismes très petits qui ont très peu

de ressources et qui ne seraient pas dans une position d'employer des avocats pour leur dire exactement quelles sont les répercussions du projet de loi 65.

Donc, j'espère qu'on verra des formulaires écrits dans un langage beaucoup plus facile que celui dans le projet de loi pour expliquer à toutes les agences à but non lucratif dans la province ce qui se passe, parce qu'elles font certainement un bon travail, et je les encourage à continuer.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions?

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm pleased to rise and make a few comments on Bill 65 in respect to the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. I think it's important to note that the current act has not being substantially revised since 1953, which is many years ago, decades ago now, so obviously I think in this modern world we need to revise this act and bring it into this millennium.

This legislation reflects the feedback that we got from our partners through an extensive consultation process. Of course, we all know what good work these not-for-profit organizations do within our ridings, but I think it's useful to know that in 2003 these not-for-profit organizations reported almost \$50 billion in annual revenues. So you can see the magnitude of the work they do just through that figure alone. This Ontario figure represents about 43% of all revenues throughout the whole Dominion of Canada, so clearly they are very vigorous within our communities all across the province.

What we're talking about here is making it easier for not-for-profit corporations to operate and do business in today's world and today's marketplace. We've introduced this act that, if passed, would provide a modern legal framework that addresses the needs of approximately 46,000 not-for-profit corporations in Ontario. It's a huge number and, as I said, shows the significance of all the good work that they do here.

It will simplify the incorporation process to allow incorporation in as little as three to five working days, down from up to two months. These are just some of the new regimes that we'll put in place to modernize an act that hasn't been substantially revised since 1953.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions?

Mr. Jim Wilson: You are the critic for the PC caucus, Madam Speaker. I was reading your remarks—they were absolutely wonderful—on second reading, in your leadoff debate.

1910

We are waiting as a caucus to see what the groups say. There are, just so people know, an estimated 161,000 non-profits and charities in Canada. Imagine Canada gives us some statistics that say that Canada's non-profit and voluntary sector is the second-largest in the world; the Netherlands is the largest and the United States is fifth. So congratulations to all those hard-working volunteers. The sector represents \$79.1 billion, or 7.8% of our GDP. Imagine Canada says that that's larger than the automotive or manufacturing industries.

I noticed that one of the things that this bill is meant to do is enhance "member democracy by expanding member remedies to ensure directors are acting in the corporation's best interests." It's timely in the sense that the Newmarket SPCA board made a decision to euthanize some 350 animals. Obviously the membership didn't agree with that board. I think 100 animals did end up getting euthanized because of ringworm. I just wonder if, whenever the parliamentary assistant or the minister speak, perhaps we could find out whether, in a real-case scenario-the SPCA in Newmarket being a non-profit animal shelter—the membership would have more democratic rights, as you pointed out in your remarks, Madam Speaker, in terms of making sure the board of directors not only acts in the best fiduciary interests of the corporation itself but also in the interests of the volunteer members, for which it is supposed to be responsible. I'd be interested to see if any of the government members have a comment on that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I want to start off my two minutes by commending the member from Nickel Belt. I thought her presentation was thoughtful and very thorough.

I also want to say that I was in the House, Madam Speaker, when as the member for York-Simcoe you presented what I thought was one of the most fulsome and complete and competent understandings of the non-profit sector. So I just want to—

Mr. John O'Toole: That's not what you said yesterday.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Yes, it's exactly what I said yesterday, and the member from Durham can check the record. I want to thank you for that, because I come from that sector.

I spoke for 10 minutes yesterday at length about it, and I was asked by our whip to speak about it today. I just want to put on the record something in a very non-partisan way, because I think this is something we share. It is impossible for governments over the next 10 years to meet the needs of an aging population—the health care dollars—and what will eventually be declining revenues, starting about eight or 10 years out. The private sector brings a great deal of complications to that, and they can't do that. I fundamentally believe that this legislation, and the specificity with which it corrects so many problems facing the non-profit sector, create the opportunity.

We only have to look at a city like London, where 80% of the city of London's public services are not provided by the private sector or the public sector but by a range of not-for-profit and non-governmental organizations, right from transit to housing.

When I was mayor of Winnipeg, we built 4,500 affordable housing units, owned and run by the people who lived in that community. That was 10 times the amount of public housing that was built that year in Toronto, a city much larger.

I think that this is a foundation for bold new public policy initiatives in the future to address some very pressing problems.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Toronto Centre is quite magnanimous this evening, which is a good sign. I'm glad that he didn't run for mayor of the city of Toronto. The reason I say that is because George Smitherman will have an easier job of it.

The real point is that he's quite generous in his comment tonight that we really have to recognize the not-for-profit sector. There's no question about that. I think, Madam Speaker, respectfully, that your remarks earlier, your response as our critic, were so exact because of the time you spent—I believe it was a full year—dialoguing with people, whether it's people working in the cultural area or the arts area. All those not-for-profits that really work to enhance the quality of life that we share need to be protected.

The most important part that I see: There are the governance issues here, and I fully understand that. The member's remarks were—quite a bit of it was in French, so I didn't understand all of it; I didn't have the advantage of translation at the time. But I believe she as well has worked in community-based organizations, so she knows of what she speaks.

The member for Whitby-Oshawa, Christine Elliott—I was at a wonderful celebration this past week. Minister Best was there to celebrate with the Abilities Centre in Durham. There's another example in which a community-based organization is working for a common purpose, for a common outcome, to enhance the quality of life for persons with special needs. Full accessibility is what the Abilities Centre in Durham is all about. All four levels of government were there: local, regional, provincial and federal.

What we need to do is make sure that people who work in volunteer positions on these boards are not liable for inadvertent decisions. Direct and intended decisions are quite another thing that could be challenged. But I think, as part XI says, it's fundamental—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member for Nickel Belt has two minutes to respond.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to start by thanking the members from Chatham-Kent-Essex, Simcoe-Grey, Toronto Centre and Durham for their comments.

When we look at not-for-profits, we have to look at the corporations that make them up, at the boards of directors, at the governance. The people on the boards of directors of not-for-profit organizations in Ontario are the ears, the eyes and the conscience of those communities that they serve. We have to modify the laws to allow them to do that job unencumbered by the fact that if they make a mistake, they are fiscally responsible for that. Because then you'll see not-for-profit corporations that are not fulfilling the important mandate that not-for-profits have in this province.

The member from Toronto Centre talked about 80% of the services provided in London, as an example, coming from the not-for-profit sector. They play an integral part. Not only are they able to deliver good-quality services at a reasonable price; they are also an economic engine for the communities in which they offer programs and services. They usually offer decent, respectful employment to the people who work for them, plus they offer tons of volunteer opportunities for people who want to volunteer. But I want to be very sure that this legislation is not a step that will force volunteers to do jobs that are the responsibility of our government to provide.

I take exception to one of the comments that was made by the member from Toronto Centre: that it is impossible for a government to meet the needs of an aging population. This is absolutely not true. We are able to meet the needs of the population if you do things differently. If you support people in their own homes, it will be cheaper.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. David Zimmer: Let me apologize for rising to speak on Bill 65, the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, without a tie on. I was not expecting to be here this evening for this rare late-night sitting. If the people at home watching this show realize that all of their hardworking MPPs from all parties are going to be here tonight until 12 o'clock, they'll have some appreciation for the very long days that we have here, which in this case started at 9 o'clock this morning. Nine in the morning till 12 at night is a long, long day, and I apologize for not having my tie on.

I'm very pleased to speak to the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. In my professional career before I was elected in 2003, I spent many, many years practising law, and in the context of that, I served on the boards of a number of not-for-profit agencies. In addition to that, I also had a bit of a sub-specialty in law where I advised the boards of not-for-profits on the host of issues that they had to deal with over the years. At the time, one thing that I realized, well before I came to this chamber, was that the act, the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, really needed a fine combing-through, an overhaul, to bring it up to standard so that it could deal with the sorts of issues we're dealing with here in 2010.

1920

Madam Speaker, you've heard from a number of speakers who have referenced that the act originates from 1953 and hasn't had any real amendments since then. The world in which not-for-profits operate has changed dramatically since 1953. That's 57 years ago. Things are done differently now. The things that are expected of not-for-profits are dramatically different from what they were 57 years ago.

An even more important aspect of the issue of the modernization of not-for-profit corporations is that today, particularly in the very difficult economic times we find ourselves in and the challenging times we find ourselves in, there is a greater demand for the services that not-for-

profits provide and a greater expectation that not-forprofits will step up to the plate on a whole range of issues that our governments and our societies have to deal with. So it is really incumbent upon government to give notfor-profits a modern context in which they can operate, so that they can deliver the very best services, the very best of what they do.

The recipients of those services are, of course, the members of the public. Government today, for a variety of reasons, finds it very, very necessary and helpful—I suppose that of the two words, "helpful" and "necessary," I would stress the necessity of working with not-for-profits and of ensuring that we work together to provide the many services that not-for-profits do.

That's the driving force, the context, the motive, if you will, behind this modernization exercise of the not-for-profit corporations world.

Keep in mind that today there are some 46,000 notfor-profit corporations in Ontario. If you sort of pause and close your eyes and think about the variety of services and undertakings of not-for-profits in Ontario— 46,000 not-for-profits—the services they provide are dramatically different. We hear about the United Appeal and the Alzheimer Society of Canada and the Canadian Cancer Society. Those are the big sisters and big brothers of the world of not-for-profit corporations. Then we get down to the medium-sized ones and the smaller ones and so on. But there are thousands and thousands of small not-for-profits that are operating in our communities, providing niche services that all of us in our respective ridings have grown accustomed to, and we really have the obligation to create a context in which they can operate more effectively.

Let me just walk through some of the salient points in the legislation that will work toward meeting our motive of modernizing and providing a better context. There are many, many aspects I would like to cover, but I've got about 15 minutes left, so I'm just going to touch on a few, in no particular order.

First of all, what the new act is going to do is simplify the incorporation process to allow incorporation of not-for-profits in as little as three to five working days. That's down from about six to eight weeks. One of the complaints I would hear when I was working in the not-for-profit world and doing not-for-profit legal work and so on was the complexity, especially if it was a small neighbourhood or community not-for-profit that was setting up, perhaps to help out some hockey parents, perhaps to help out some schoolchildren—some small piece of the not-for-profit world. They found themselves in the complex and tricky world of incorporation and had to hire lawyers, and it took six or eight weeks or more. It was very, very difficult.

We've simplified that process, so that if someone has an idea, if a group of citizens in your community has a thought of some service they can provide, they can quickly incorporate and quickly get the benefits of notfor-profit incorporation. And if they can quickly do that and quickly get those benefits, the service they are providing could be provided quickly; they could satisfy that need quickly. So simplification is a big thing.

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Another thing we're going to do with this is enhance corporate governance and accountability. What do I mean by that? Well, most people involved in not-for-profits, especially in the medium-sized and smaller ones, are unsure of the obligations they are taking on. If they become president, vice-president or a director, what is expected of them? What duty of care do they have to demonstrate? How do they meet that?

What we've done is spelled out a statutory duty—*Interjection*.

Mr. David Zimmer: Lou, I can't hear myself think. Ouiet.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Sorry.

Mr. David Zimmer: I'm sorry for the intervention, Madam Speaker, but it's very distracting, especially by a member of your own party.

Many new presidents, vice-presidents and officers of these not-for-profits get involved, and they have to call a lawyer and ask, "What's expected of me? What do I have to do? What can I do? What can't I do? What are my responsibilities for the finances?" and so on and so forth. So the act sets out very clearly what is expected of an officer or member of a not-for-profit. That again brings simplification and clarity.

Another thing that officers and directors of not-forprofits often worry about is, "If I become president, vicepresident or a director and things go wrong—if we're providing transportation services for senior citizens and there's some terrible car accident or truck accident what is my liability? What am I responsible for?" It makes them very, very nervous. These are people who are coming to this exercise and want to contribute their time and expertise voluntarily, but at the same time, they worry about their personal liability.

What we have done is provide directors and officers with better protection from personal liability. If we can provide that protection from personal liability through insurance mechanisms and that sort of thing, what that will do is take some of the worry out of serving as an officer of a not-for-profit and we can attract more people who want to get involved but perhaps are afraid of some of the risk. So this is a mechanism to attract the very best people and more people to get involved in not-for-profits.

We've also got several sections in the new act that will increase the rights of members of not-for-profits by providing greater transparency. Here's an important point: When I was practising law in this area, it was not unusual, for a variety of reasons, for a not-for-profit to get into some financial difficulty. That was because they were operating on tight budgets, they were volunteers, they were laypersons, and perhaps didn't understand the minutiae of financial statements and financial reporting. Sometimes there would be a terrible knot, a terrible tangle there, and lawyers and accountants would have to get involved to straighten it out. So we've got a number of transparencies that are built around the whole access to the financial information of a particular not-for-profit—

again, simplication, clarity and shortening of the process, making it clear to everybody how to run a not-for-profit.

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An aspect of that is a simpler financial review process. a simpler audit process. Those things are very, very important because not-for-profits are, in effect, spending public money, in the sense that they take in collections and they do fundraisers. People who are contributing to the particular non-profit of their choice want the assurance that their money is going in there and that it's going to be well managed and it's going to be accounted for and there's going to be transparency. The not-for-profit certainly wants to do that. If we can marry those two needs—the need for transparency and clarity—with the donors' expectation that they want to have that transparency and clarity, I rather think what's going to happen is that the donors are going to be even more generous. If we have a context in which donors are encouraged to be more generous because they have the confidence in how their donation is going to be managed and so on, that's good for the non-profit. That means more income. If the non-profit has more income, that's better for the market or the service that they're providing, be it a seniors' organization, a youth organization or what have you.

There has always been a problem about what non-profits can do in terms of commercial activities. It has been kind of a murky area. There has been this idea that not-for-profits ought to stay away from commercial activities in terms of raising money. What the legislation is going to do is allow not-for-profits to engage in some commercial activities where the revenues from those commercial activities are reinvested in the corporation to support the purposes of the corporation. Again, we're creating a context where we make it easier and simpler and more attractive for a not-for-profit to raise funds. This, again, goes back to the idea of creating a context where we encourage not-for-profits to be financially transparent, financially healthy. That's good for every-body: donors and the users of the service.

As I said earlier, the not-for-profit legislation is some 57 years old. You only have to reflect on your own day-to-day lives: the commercial aspects of your life, the business aspects of your life, the financial aspects of your life. How you interact with banks and how you do your banking and how you spend your money and all of those sorts of things have changed dramatically in 57 years. What this legislation does is bring the not-for-profits up to date, into the modern world. That's good for everybody.

Let me just give you some useful statistics so that you can put what not-for-profits do in a financial context. Did you know—and these figures are six or seven years old now—that in 2003, the last year we have really meaningful statistics for this sort of thing—and I should say that as a result of this legislation, if passed, we'll be in a position to get really current, up-to-date and reliable statistics. But there was a statistic prepared in 2003 which told us that just in Ontario not-for-profit organizations reported—and I found this staggering, because I

was not aware of this statistic until just recently-almost \$50 billion in annual revenues—\$50 billion. The Ontario budget itself, in the last few years, is about \$90 billion or \$100 billion. Not-for-profits' revenues are equal to half of what the Ontario government's revenues are. That's a huge amount of money. Imagine if not-for-profits did not do what they have to do to raise that \$50 billion, and you took all of those services that the not-for-profits provided and had to add those onto the provincial budget, in effect saying, "The not-for-profits aren't providing it, so the province should provide it"-because they're all meaningful and worthwhile services. That would increase our annual budget by \$50 billion. I think people lose sight of that tremendous contribution that the not-for-profits are making to the welfare and betterment of everybody here in Ontario.

That \$50 billion comes from the huge not-for-profits that have province-wide funding campaigns and raise millions of dollars and from the neighbourhood, tiny not-for-profits that are doing something for the school hockey team or a nursing home in the area or a senior citizens' home. Adding all that up: \$50 billion.

Because it's a \$50-billion exercise, we really need the best possible legislation to regulate, to govern, to oversee that. Because it's a \$50-billion exercise, we need the most modem piece of legislation, to reflect the context of our times.

Another fact that was generated by that 2003 statistic is that in Ontario there were almost one million workers employed in the not-for-profit sector—one million employees in the not-for-profit sector. Until I dug out these statistics, I didn't realize myself that it was that high. Those one million employees who were employed—and these are 2003 figures—represented one sixth of all employed Ontarians. The province, in addition to the one million employees, had approximately 7.8 million volunteers at the time. So in effect that's a workforce of 8.8 million employees: seven million volunteers and one million employees.

That order of magnitude—the \$50 billion in revenues that the not-for-profits generate in a year; one million employees, 7.8 million volunteers—should give you a context and a reason why this legislation, modernizing the world of not-for-profits, is absolutely essential. It's just as essential as anything else in Ontario if we're going to provide the highest quality—the best quality—of life in Ontario.

Governments can't do everything. They can do a lot, but governments need and depend on the enormous contribution that not-for-profits make to our society. Since we depend on that and we need it and we recognize its value, we have an obligation to create a corporate context, if you will, which will enable the not-for-profits to work with their stakeholders to provide, again, all of those services together with the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: Mr. Speaker, nice to see you here in this evening sitting tonight.

I'm pleased to add some comments on the speech by the member from Willowdale on Bill 65, the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010. Certainly, the PC caucus recognizes that the non-profit sector is an important part of Ontario's economy. We support reforming the governance of non-profits to reflect current-day realities, but of course it has to be done right.

The member from Willowdale started out speaking by asking why we are here tonight, so I'd like to respond to that question that he posed at the beginning of his speech. We in the opposition thought we had an agreement on what is called a programming motion so that we'd know what bills we were speaking to. All of the bills that the government wanted to deal with from now until June 3 would be dealt with in a timely and reasonable fashion. In fact, we were operating, for a number of days following the programming motion, on the belief that our House leader, Mr. Yakabuski, had negotiated an agreement in principle.

Part of what we were getting for following this was an opposition day motion which was to be debated tomorrow. Our motion which we filed was on the HST, to give the Legislature a chance to vote on the HST, seeing as it was not something brought up in the last election. We realize when we hear from our constituents that it's a really important concern. I guess the government House leader didn't like our opposition day motion, so they pulled out and changed their mind about this programming motion.

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As a result of that, the opposition has to use what tools we have, and that includes ringing bells and being here till midnight this evening to debate bills. So we're pleased to debate Bill 65 and we're looking forward to staying here until midnight this evening.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I find it a little bit hard to take that the member from the Liberal Party would stand up and do the praise of all of the not-for profits, all the good work that they do and the value-added that they bring to the province of Ontario, but when they have an opportunity to support the not-for-profit sector, it is all but gone.

We've asked to put a moratorium on the competitive bidding process for home care twice now since this government got into power. What has the competitive bidding process done to home care? It has bankrupted all of the good, well-established not-for-profits that brought value-added to our communities. They are all but gone from the home care system. We now have the American-style Comcare and We Care and all of those which have moved into our communities.

When competitive bidding came into play, VON, which had been a stellar provider of home care in Sudbury, went bankrupt. They were a good, not-for-profit, good-citizen organization of our community. What were they replaced with? They were replaced with subsidiaries of American home care providers that offer

horrible working conditions, that do not provide for the economic base of our community, that are forever trying to recruit and retain a stable workforce because if any of their workers can get a shift at McDonald's, they get 25 cents more an hour, and this is where they go. So don't tell me how important the not-for-profit sector is to the Liberal government, because when they have a chance to do something about it, they don't.

The same thing is happening in the long-term-care sector. Not that we have too many new beds, but in the last 2,000 beds that were put out through the competitive bidding process, all but about 138 of them—128, actually, to be exact—went to for-profit corporations. If not-for-profit was so important, they would have—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The member for Mississauga-Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: It's a pleasure to stand up and pass comments on the always erudite deliberations of the member for Willowdale.

The current legislation that governs not-for-profits was last substantially revised in 1953. All I can say is, I was actually alive at that point, but that was a long time ago. Prior to that, this statute had really not been changed since 1907. At that time, other than the fact that I think Hazel McCallion was still the mayor of Mississauga at that point, that is a long time ago. So this one is really ready for a remake, and that's what this legislation does. It takes the statutes that govern not-for-profits, those organizations that deliver some of the most essential services, services that every year at around this time we as members stand up and reward many of the volunteers who serve non-profits in our communities, our ethnic organizations, our organizations serving newcomers, our organizations around health care, our seniors' organizations. All of these organizations function with an antiquated 1953 act that predates the Ford Edsel. In fact, it goes back—well, it's a postwar act. It's about time, like another postwar relic, the PST, that it too was replaced. Indeed, it will be replaced: by a modern act that is going to provide significant benefits for the notfor-profit sector.

Among the many benefits—well, I'm out of time. I look forward to being able to speak to this act in the very near future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Hillier: As I was listening to the member from Willowdale speak, it really caught my attention that he was astonished and amazed at the statistics of the not-for-profits. He went on at length about the \$50 billion in revenue that not-for-profits have and the over one million employees. But I guess, far be it from the Liberals to understand an industry before they bring in legislation to regulate it. That would be a little bit out of character for this Liberal Party.

There are a couple of elements of this bill that I'd like the Liberals to ponder on a little bit. I'll give you some examples. One was increasing the ability for not-forprofits to engage in commercial activity. I'll give you a couple of examples. The March of Dimes is a not-for-profit; it's a \$100-million corporation. Some \$95 million of its revenue comes from activities engaged with government: WSIB—there's a host of them. Some \$5 million comes from private donations. Trees Ontario is another example: \$6 million in revenue; \$500,000 in actual donations; \$5.5 million in taxpayer funding goes to that not-for-profit. I think it's important for us to consider: You want to increase those abilities. For most people, when you say "not-for-profit," it conjures up an image of community-based volunteers funded by individual donations.

Ought the Liberals not to be looking at what really does constitute a not-for-profit as well? Instead of just promoting further commercialization, let's fully understand the industry before you bring in legislation to regulate it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Willowdale has two minutes in response.

Mr. David Zimmer: In my earlier remarks, I stressed openness and clarity and modernization and creating a context so that not-for profits can not only continue to thrive but can thrive in a new way. Really, that ties in with what this chamber heard in the throne speech: Open Ontario. It's part of the same culture. In the throne speech, we talked about all of the things we were doing for the Open Ontario initiative. The not-for-profit legislation really does reflect the feedback that we received from shareholders through the consultation process that we carried out quite extensively. The modernization of the Corporations Act really supports Ontario's Open for Business initiative by enhancing the efficiency of Ontario's business laws and tying them in so that they reflect the special needs of the world of not-for-profits.

We're doing the same thing in the not-for-profit world as we are in Open Ontario: streamlining operational and administrative requirements, improving efficiency, harmonizing the law with the laws in other Canadian jurisdictions and, above all, providing corporate governance and accountability clarification and transparency for not-for-profits. So this legislation, if passed, is going to be good for not-for-profits, it's going to be good for Ontarians and it's especially going to be good for all of those recipients of the very, very fine services provided by not-for-profits.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Shurman: I can tell you that tonight I'll be talking to the people who are in this House and whoever is taking a break from the hockey game to watch us on the Ontario legislative channel. It can't be an awful lot of people. We're between periods; it's 1-0 and the Canadiens are down. That was just a short plug.

I want to talk a little bit about Bill 65, the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010. The first thing I want to observe is that during this debate we've had the pleasure of the presence of the minister who brought this bill. I want to congratulate her, because it is, I believe, the first major bill that she has brought before the House. She's dealing with a subject that affects us all and affects me on a couple of levels.

First of all, it's an important subject. It's an important subject because of what we've heard from other members and what the bill itself states, and that is that we haven't taken a look at not-for-profits for a very, very long time. Like everything else in our society, there has been a great degree of change in the not-for-profit sector and how it does business, in the growth of the not-for-profit sector and the levels on which it operates.

When I was a little boy, there wasn't very much thought that you had to give to the not-for profit sector, because it usually was somebody who knocked on your door and asked for pocket change. That was the not-for-profit sector then. The not-for-profit sector now is a huge web of generally electronically intermingled and tangled organizations that are sometimes dealing in yesteryear's legislative nightmares in trying to do incredible work. And they do incredible work, so we should all support

them. One of the ways we can do that is by ensuring they

have a climate in which that work is simplified.

These are times of need. If you take a look at the last couple of years, natural disasters alone have brought out the best in Canadians. They've brought out the best in a lot of people, but Canadians, of all the people around the world who are called upon to give when there's a tsunami, when there's an earthquake, when there is war and destruction in some other country, seem to come to the fore and do so more quickly, more readily, in greater numbers and with bigger dollars than virtually any other people on earth, and there are statistics to support that.

I would like to mention a couple of things as well. One of the first reactions I saw from some people who should know—I'm talking about the Ontario Bar Association—was very supportive. What they were and are saying is that Ontario's non-profit and charity lawyers are pleased to see a long-awaited act like this, and that the legislation "will bring corporate law and governance into the modern era."

That's what I've been talking about. When you talk about the difference between a doorbell ringing and somebody asking you for dimes and quarters, and sitting down at your computer with the ability to donate thousands and thousands of dollars, or as in, I think, all of our cases here—certainly in mine—being able to click a couple of boxes and know that your bank account is going to be accessed time and time again on a weekly or monthly basis, for years in some cases, makes it a far cry from what we were thinking about back in the 1950s. So they're pretty happy about it. They say the legislation "will bring corporate law and governance into the modern era and will meet the sophisticated needs of thousands of charitable and non-profit corporations in Ontario, helping them to operate more efficiently and effectively." I can say that our caucus supports that principle.

Volunteerism, which is really the underpinning of the not-for-profit sector, is legendary in Ontario. I think many members of this House, over the course of the past couple of weeks—certainly the past couple of months—

have gone out with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in their own communities to hand out Ontario Volunteer Awards. When you take a look at the number of hours—it's in the millions—that are given freely and willingly by people who were never asked to do so, who never received any compensation, who never asked for any award but nonetheless are being recognized, what it does is give us a measuring tool or yardstick on the depth of commitment to volunteerism in the province of Ontario. New Canadians very particularly-I have some very personal knowledge of that when I look in my own community and my own riding of Thornhill. We have approximately 150 ethnicities in Thornhill, and we're talking about people who are pretty well across the board newer or new Canadians. The first thing they think of is how they can raise money, either to help family and friends who are still at home-"home" being their mother country-and secondly, and almost on an equal footing. how they can raise money and contribute to their own communities.

I'm thinking very particularly of a Korean community within our community that not only has established itself from a business perspective, from a social perspective and from a religious perspective, but has also created a series of awards that are never given to Koreans. They're given to other communities within the community so that the Koreans can recognize the reality of where they live on a global scale. That, to me, is a magnificent tribute to what I am saying: that we Canadians, even in the intake of our newest people, imbue this quality that we have, and I don't think it is any stronger than here in Ontario.

There is a need for community organization. There are needs I have identified that are rooted in natural disaster, that are rooted in war. In the last year or two years, we've seen, very sadly, at the level of things like food banks, needs that are rooted in economic difficulties. Whether we want to take the opportunity to say, "It's your fault," to the Liberal side, or whether it's happenstance on a worldwide scale, regardless of where it came from, people wound up out of work when they least expected, and the result of being out of work was that they needed our help. We in Ontario—we in Canada—extended that helping hand and made sure they got it in their hour of need

The last thing I want to mention on this, before I get into the nuts and bolts of the act, is something that affects me because of my Jewish roots. I'll use the word "tzedakah." It's Hebrew for "charity." It's a very deeprooted principle. In fact, I would say it goes beyond my Judaic roots; it's a Judeo-Christian precept.

What tzedakah suggests is that there are four levels of charity. There's the one where I give you something. I hand it to you, so you know who I am and I know who you are. The second is where I give willingly but I don't know who you are, or where you take willingly but you don't know who I am. The last is where we don't know each other at all. That's the form of charity we're talking about, and it's what most of our not-for-profits engage in.

What I'm saying is that I'll write a cheque because I believe in a cause, believing that that money will be used

properly to help people I am never going to see, who are never going to see me, who are never going to know me but who are going to reap the benefit of my giving. That's the best of tzedakah. I wanted to cite that because that principle is at the root of this bill and at the root of what not-for-profits do.

Not too many years ago, before I got into this business or the business many of you know me for—broad-casting—I owned and operated a call centre, and its prime business was handling not-for-profit donations. We handled some of the best of them: Foster Parents Plan, World Wildlife Fund, Hospital for Sick Children, Red Cross—I could go on and name you 20 more. The point is, we learned how to do it.

It was in an intervening period. It was between that period when we did person-to-person, door-to-door collections and the period now when people by and large donate using a website somewhere. I learned what kind of governance there was in some of the better organizations, but I also learned that there were fly-by-nighters out there—whom of course I haven't named—who would take advantage of people.

So it's an appropriate thing—it took me 10 minutes to get here—to say that, certainly in principle, our party, and I in particular, agree with the concept of revitalizing our approach to the not-for-profit sector and at looking for the first time in—what?—57 years at a rethink that is absolutely necessary.

I do worry a little bit: Sometimes when a bill sounds good, I have to pinch myself and say, "This is a Liberal bill." A Liberal bill typically sounds good but requires scrutiny to determine if it measures up. So I think I'm going to take a break, review this bill and see if it measures up, and perhaps come back later.

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Shurman has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2000 to 2030.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members please take their seats. It's a pleasure to be here in the evening and it's a pleasure to be in the chair not wearing the penguin outfit.

Mr. Shurman has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please rise to be recorded by the Clerk.

All those opposed?

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 8; the nays are 28.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion lost.

Further debate.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Chapter 2—and it's still 1-0 near the end of the second period.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Talk for a little while and then adjourn again, okay?

Mr. Peter Shurman: And thank you to the Speaker for having the air conditioning turned on. If we're going to make spurious comments, we may as well thank people who do us favours. Thank you, sir.

When the minister introduced the bill, she said, "The current Corporations Act governs the incorporation, governance and dissolution of not-for-profit corporations. It was first enacted in 1907 and has not been substantially updated since 1953. Our partners in the sector have told us that it is cumbersome, antiquated and does not adequately meet the needs of Ontario's not-for-profit sector." She is right, and that's why, in principle, the concept of this bill is a good one, and with some degree of trepidation I'm inclined to say that I support it. I support the principle.

Applause.

Mr. Peter Shurman: One of the things that worries me, however, before you applaud too loudly on the other side, is the fact that this is a Liberal bill and, as seen with the Green Energy Act and as seen today with the introduction of the new water opportunities bill and with the Open for Business Act, which is really about red tape which the Liberals invented and now, through this act, seem to want to reverse, the road to hell seems to be paved with Dalton McGuinty's good intentions. So as I say, the bill makes some sense to me, but I worry a little bit about it and I've learned in three years to become a little bit shy on this. But let's refocus the spotlight on what we're talking about: not-for-profits and the good work that they do, and the wide range of services and supports that they provide to our society.

I have, very recently particularly but over a long period of time, made a lot of speeches to a lot of groups about getting active, about the concept of civic engagement, about the need for ordinary citizens to have voices heard. Oftentimes I talk about this in the political sense, but I also talk about it in the sense of not-for-profits. I don't really care what people support; that's their choice. What I care about is that they get up off their duffs and get out and do something for the community. That's what it's about. But there are some things that we have to take into consideration.

In 2000 an American writer, Robert Putnam, wrote a groundbreaking book, and he called it Bowling Alone. He concluded that in the United States, social capital, the fabric that binds society and communities, was in serious decline. I underscore that I said "in the United States." He goes on and draws on evidence, including nearly 500,000 interviews over the past quarter of a century, to show that fewer petitions are signed, that fewer people belong to organizations, that fewer people know their neighbours, meet with their friends less frequently, and people even socialize with friends and family less than they used to. Yes, a lot of it has to do with Twitter and a lot of it has to do with MySpace and with Facebook. It's easier to thumb some keyboard than to go and talk to people. In effect, volunteerism in the United States,

according to Putnam, is in deep decline. That highlights the importance of not-for-profit corporations. They have stepped in where volunteerism of the average citizen has declined. There's growing recognition, now, that government cannot bring all things to all people, that people have to be involved.

We cannot expect government to meet every societal need, and that is where the not-for-profit sector plays a vital role in society. Fortunately—and this is why I underscored "United States" when I quoted from Putnam-Canada doesn't fall into the same category. Canada has a very enviable record on volunteerism. It hasn't dropped as far as the US. According to Imagine Canada, Canada's non-profit and voluntary sector is the second-largest in the world. The United States stands fifth. So we can pat ourselves on the back a little bit. Having said that, we can always do better. A bill like this, when we consider it in a Legislature of the stature of Ontario's, dealing as we are with a third of the population of the country, needs to set an example and needs to make sure that when we're dealing with 46,000 not-forprofit organizations—46,000 of them—we have a regulatory structure in which they can operate, in which they can thrive, in which they're not tied up in red tape and in which they're not attached to antiquated laws that are over 50 years old. Not-for-profits need a legislative framework that allows them to operate efficiently to bring the greatest benefit in carrying out their public purpose in a digital and global environment.

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Shurman: You know, you're running too much interference on me. I'm going to have to stop soon.

I also want to say that there's a reason why we're debating this bill tonight. Ultimately, we know it's going to pass, probably after a time allocation motion. The reason that we're here at 8:35 tonight, as opposed to during the day, is because of the inability of our House leaders to come together. The Liberals wouldn't give on a programming motion. It's very simply because they didn't want to hear about the HST again. All we wanted to do was debate a motion that would have put off the implementation of the HST until a later date, when people had their say. For that reason, I have to move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Shurman has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour will say aye.

All those opposed will say nay.

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2038 to 2108.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order.

Mr. Shurman has moved adjournment of the House. All those in favour, please rise to be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please rise to be counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 9; the nays are 31.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

Pursuant to standing order 47(c), there having been six and a half hours of debate on this bill, this debate is deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: We have no further debate on this bill. Madam Speaker.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

FAR NORTH ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR LE GRAND NORD

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 18, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 191, An Act with respect to land use planning and protection in the Far North / Projet de loi 191, Loi relative à l'aménagement et à la protection du Grand Nord.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington has the floor.

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's my pleasure to speak once again to Bill 191, the Far North Act. It's a little after 9 p.m. this evening, and of course we're here speaking to this bill because the Liberal government reneged on a deal on the HST opposition day motion and did not want to have a vote on the HST. So we're going to speak about Bill 191, seeing that they're a little fearful of speaking about the HST.

The interesting part of Bill 191—and there are many interesting parts—is that the Liberal government has said that they have worked tirelessly and they have a commitment to the First Nations to have them on board with this bill.

The NAN First Nations, on April 1, proposed, voted on and approved a resolution condemning this Liberal government over Bill 191 and how it takes away many of their treaty rights and allows the Liberal government to impose conditions in the north such as depriving everybody in this province of a quarter-million square kilometres of land that will become the Liberal superpark of Canada—the super-park of Ontario—and will prevent all development and any economic activity on a quarter-million square kilometres of land.

It was interesting listening to the minister speak to this bill earlier this evening. She was talking about the wolverines and the golden hawks. Really, it was touching, how the wolverines and the golden hawks were so important to the minister. But what about the people in northern Ontario? Do they not have a say? What about the First Nations people in Ontario? Do they not have a say? Is this Liberal government so far out of touch and uncompassionate about the people who live there that they will take away any ability to have economic prosperity?

They have no care, no concern, no regard for the people of the north, and we've seen that time and time again. We saw it very clearly when they didn't consult anybody on this Bill 191.

Interjection: They never do.

Mr. Randy Hillier: No, they did consult one person. But they didn't consult the prospectors and developers. They certainly didn't consult with the First Nations community. They didn't consult with the municipalities. They didn't consult with anybody except their favourite little green buddy from the World Wildlife Fund, Monte Hummel. He was at the committee hearings, and he of course said that he was consulted. But everybody else who was asked said that it came as a total surprise and total shock that this Liberal government had introduced Bill 191.

We've seen where this Liberal government gets their ideas, where they get their policy initiatives. It's not from people. It's not from individuals. It's not from the real stakeholders. They get their policy initiatives from groups that they fund, like the Working Families Coalition; they get to determine Liberal labour policy. When it comes to environmental policy or natural resources policy—

Mr. Jim Wilson: World Wildlife.

Mr. Randy Hillier: The World Wildlife Fund is a great resource for this Liberal government.

Of course, they fund all these groups with significant amounts of taxpayers' money. They take money from taxpayers and then fund their own lobby and advocacy groups and come up with legislation that, of course, harms the people whom they collected the money from in the first place but is of great benefit to their friends.

I want to just read from this NAN resolution—I think you've got it.

Interjection.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Did you give it back to me? Then I'm missing a piece. I'll find it a little bit later.

Anyway, we also saw that, and I mentioned this earlier, this Liberal government is completely abrogating any use in a quarter of a million square kilometres of land. They're not going to allow any hydro development. They're not going to allow any roads. They're not going to allow any mines, any forestry—nothing will be allowed there. Of course, I guess Monte Hummel will probably get a free pass to the park on our dime, but everybody else will be out of the loop. Maybe the Minister of Natural Resources will get up there once in a while as well.

Also, what a contradiction with this Liberal government, because we've all heard during the budget discussions and their throne speech about the Ring of Fire and how this Ring of Fire is going to bring untold prosperity to the north. Well, there's one little contradiction here: The Ring of Fire is in the north where the superpark is going to be, where there's no development allowed. It's one more of those little examples of Liberals making legislation without understanding what it is that they're doing. They're just appeasing their groups, but killing our economy in the north.

Here's a statement from the NAN First Nations: "This Far North Act is socially and morally unjust. It makes a mockery of the treaty signed by the Nishnawbe Aski First Nations and the crown governments of Canada and

Ontario. It will lock down First Nations' homelands and prevent them from achieving economic development that would help end a cycle of devastating poverty and injustice."

That's what the First Nations communities in the north are saying about Bill 191, and the minister tonight had the gall to stand up and say, "We are committed to working with the First Nations." This is what the First Nations are saying about this.

How about what Jon Baird, president of the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada said?

"Bill 191 ... would deprive ... First Nations communities ... of the economic benefits that responsible mineral resource development can provide.

"Bill 191 fails to provide First Nations with an appropriate and clearly defined role in the land use planning process.

"Bill 191 seriously compromises the ability of the minerals sector to operate in the Far North."

First Nations are opposed. Mining and mineral explorations are opposed. Municipalities are opposed.

Here is a quote from Dr. Stewart Jackson. He's a geologist and a prospector. He was at the committee hearings that these members in the Liberal government actually heard last summer. He said that it's easy to sit in Toronto and wave a line around a map and pick off huge land masses to satisfy some unrealistic quota, that the land has to be evaluated very carefully for mineral and forestry potential before any restrictions are put in place. But no, this Liberal government is going to lock off a quarter of a million square kilometres without even knowing it's there.

As I mentioned earlier, this Liberal government, when officially asked for a map and an inventory of the crown lands in northern Ontario, couldn't provide it. Now, put this in perspective, people of Ontario: Your Liberal government, the steward of crown land, cannot even proide an inventory or a map of what they are the owners of, but they're going to legislate and regulate it and prevent anybody else from being there. It's absolutely amazing that this level of incompetence can be achieved from an administration that spends over \$100 billion a year. They can't even get a map together. They can't even get an inventory list together. Some \$100 billion a year of expenses and the incompetence is even greater than their expenditures.

This Liberal government has shown contempt for the people of Ontario. I think they've also shown contempt for the people of this House. They've shown contempt for the people of Ontario in the north with Bill 191 and, just as importantly, they're also showing contempt for this House when they renege on deals that prevent us from discussing our motion on the HST. They were so fearful of voting—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: They're just shaking.

Mr. Randy Hillier: They were shaking and they're still shaking. Lou is still going to shake—that was the member for Northumberland who mentioned he was shaking. I would imagine the people in Northumberland

are going to give Lou a little bit of a shaking, come October 2011.

Anyway, it's clear to me and I think it's clear to everyne that this Liberal government reneging on their deals on the HST, hiding from a vote on the HST, really deserves that we move a motion to adjourn the debate on Bill 191.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Hillier: I moved adjournment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Hillier has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2122 to 2152.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Hillier has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour will please rise to be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed will please rise to be counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 10; the nays are 29.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I think it's important that we reference this Bill 191 to the Liberals' Open Ontario plan. Of course, we've heard much about the Liberals' Open Ontario plan through their budget—the Ring of Fire, the host of rhetoric that we've heard that would make people believe the Liberals actually want to conduct business in this province.

We know that Bill 191 is going to block off a quarter of a million square kilometres of land and prevent any economic development at all, but let's look at some of the other factors that are compounding the failures of this Liberal government in northern Ontario.

In addition to Bill 191, we also have the proposed policy on forest tenure, which everybody in the forestry industry is completely upset with. They announced it two weeks ago. It is going to create another layer of unaccountable agencies for forestry and increase the regulatory burden on our loggers and mills, if they haven't already damaged them enough.

Of course, the Endangered Species Act is harming that economic development with their significant removal of lands from forestry to protect the woodland caribou—and now Bill 191.

They're constantly putting up more and more hurdles for northern Ontario. Of course, they throw a few little crumbs out, like the \$130-a-year tax credit, as they suffocate and kill forestry, mining and any economic development.

I think it's important that we put this in context for people. We often hear, "What's this quarter of a million

square kilometres?" Well, that is a little over a hundred million acres of land in this province. For people to understand just how large that is, all the private land combined in this province is about 30 million acres. So, greater than three times the size of all the private land in this province will be dedicated to the Liberals' superpark of destitution and poverty. That will be the name of this park they're creating: the park of destitution and poverty in the north. It will be a vast, barren, empty ground, devoid of any prosperity and any economic activity.

I mentioned earlier the NAN First Nations resolution 10/22 on Bill 191, the Far North Act. I'd just like to provide the members of the Liberal Party with the exact wording of this resolution so they understand the hypocrisy and the contradiction of their statements about their commitment to work with the First Nations. It goes on:

"Therefore be it resolved that the NAN executive council is directed to issue a strong political statement to the government of Ontario to continue and strengthen its efforts in protesting the imposition of such a law on NAN First Nations prior to any reasonable effort at consultation and accommodation, and prior to seeking the free and informed consent of NAN First Nations;

"Further be it resolved that Bill 191 must be deferred until NAN First Nations and Ontario agree on a consultation, accommodation and consent process;

"Further be it resolved that the NAN chiefs-in-assembly demand that the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, commit by May 31, 2010"—that's next week—"to long-term, multi-year and multi-million dollar funding to continue and complete land use plans, whether through an arm's-length board and/or directly to First Nations;

"Finally, be it resolved that this resolution shall strengthen and support previous resolutions," which have also gone unheard by this Liberal government.

This was dated at Thunder Bay on April 1, 2010. It was moved by Chief Andrew Solomon of the Fort Albany First Nation and seconded by Chief Arlene Slipperjack of the Whitewater Lake First Nation.

So much for that hollow, empty commitment of working with First Nations by this Liberal government—taking further and further steps backwards, as they abuse and have no regard and no respect for the First Nations communities in this province. But this is, of course, the Liberals' open-door policy. This is what they call open doors: killing our industry, disregarding the expressed will of our First Nations people, killing any opportunity for anybody to make a living, earn a living and contribute in this super-park named "destitution and poverty" in northern Ontario.

2200

I mentioned in House a while ago that there is an actual physical impairment called daltonism. It is the inability to see the difference between red and green. This physical impairment that prevents people from distinguishing between red and green is clearly prevalent and dominant in all Liberals. They all seem to have this

disease, daltonism. Whenever they hear "green," Ontario gets to see red: red ink from their green policies.

Obviously there are a lot of problems with this Liberal government. We've seen time and time again that they just keep paying off their friends, buying policies, buying legislation that will benefit the few at the cost of the many.

Interjection.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I think the member from Willow-dale wants to have a fundraiser. Is that what he said?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask the member to stay with the bill.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Yes. Anyway, as we can see, this is why everybody in the north is so upset with this government. They see the failings of all these pieces of legislation and all these regulatory burdens, and they know they are insignificant and unimportant in the Liberal scheme of things, when they have buddies like the World Wildlife Fund or the Working Families Coalition cozying up to them. They just continue to cozy up with their own buddies, and northern Ontario gets you know what from this Liberal government.

Everybody has been opposed: the anglers and hunters, the Ontario fur managers, the prospectors and developers and the First Nations. Nobody likes this bill, and they have passed resolutions to oppose it. But once again, as they have shown in their contempt at the deal to bring in an opposition day motion to debate the HST, and they reneged on that, they have reneged on every deal with the north, reneged on every promise to the north, reneged on every commitment to the north. That is why the north is feeling such hardship. It's because of this Liberal government.

A quarter of a million square kilometres, 100 million acres of land and big projects as well—things like the Ring of Fire—will be in jeopardy with Bill 191. They're talking out of both sides of their mouths: They talk about Open Ontario as they close the door on the Ring of Fire, as they close the doors on our mills and forestry, as they close the doors on our towns and communities. That's the Liberal view of Open Ontario: a nice big park for the Minister of Natural Resources to take her friends from the World Wildlife Fund to on a little jaunt or a little junket up to northern Ontario to look at and marvel at the wolverines and the golden hawks, as she suggested; no people, but wolverines and golden hawks.

It is atrocious that this Liberal government would have the gall to reintroduce this bill after what they heard last year through the committee. We went to Sioux Lookout, we travelled through the north, we went to community after community and they heard it everywhere they went, from everybody who came to the committee, and they've done nothing about all those significant comments that were put in opposing Bill 191.

One has to really ask the people of this province, why did this House—why did this Liberal government—encourage and ask people to take the time out of their day to travel at great expense and over great distances to come and participate in our democracy, when this Liberal

government turned a blind eye to them, turned a deaf ear to them and were not moved in any fashion by those reasonable comments highlighting the dangers of Bill 191—nothing. That is why, with Bill 191, they have been termed "Canada's worst government"—the moniker of this Liberal government—in the Financial Post.

I'll give you another quote from Grand Chief Stan Beardy of the NAN First Nation. The quarter-million-square-kilometre conservation area established without consultation, without consent, will prevent his people "from achieving economic independence by preventing development needed to build our communities and strengthen" our Ontario economy. That's what the people of the north are saying. That's what Grand Chief Stan Beardy is saying. I'm agreeing with him because it's so obvious. Anybody with an ounce of intellect could see that Bill 191 is going to devastate Chief Stan Beardy's communities and all communities in northern Ontario.

But what do we hear? We hear some gallimaufry from the Liberal side once again, some bafflegab about how they rely on their total allegiance to daltonism. Everything else will be good. As long as daltonism is there, everything will be good. "We don't have to actually think about anything; we just have to look for the daltonism and that will see us through to the next election," they suppose, except for some of them who may be shaking over there, as we heard earlier today.

With all due respect, I do call on this Liberal government—the members of this Liberal government, this administration—to really show some sympathy, show some compassion, show some understanding for the people of northern Ontario. Go out of your way just a little bit and actually listen to them. Listen to their valid and real concerns. I know that the members from northern Ontario are hearing this all the time. They're hearing it from every quarter in northern Ontario.

There is more to being a member than just looking up to his daltonism. You do have constituents who are very concerned, and rightly so, as I've read from Chief Stan Beardy, from the resolution of the NAN First Nation and from the prospectors and developers. Everybody is looking for this Liberal government to actually demonstrate that they have respect for the people of the north. They don't want to hear this rhetoric, this gallimaufry of open doors as they slam northern Ontario shut.

Clearly, this Liberal government is out of touch and out of gas. They have nothing more to offer anybody, nothing to offer anybody as they continue to fail to see their constituents' need. They cannot see their constituents' need, or they just don't care. I'm not sure what it is. Do they not see it? Are they incapable of understanding it?

Or is it just a dismissive shrug once more from the Liberal government? Do as you're told. Just follow along. Pass the legislation. Don't bother reading it. Don't bother understanding it. Don't bother caring about the consequences of it. Because daltonism says pass it, they'll pass it.

Anyway, we're here at 10:10 on a Tuesday evening because Liberals are known to renege on their deals:

renege on deals with our House leader, renege on deals with the people of northern Ontario, renege on the deal with the forestry industry on the tenure review, renege on their deals with the mining industry, renege on deals with everybody.

Oh, there is one group they never reneged on a deal with.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Who's that? Courtyard?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Monte Hummel of the World Wildlife Fund never has his deal reneged on. Pat Dillon from Working Families never has a deal reneged on. And, of course, the consultants at the pork yard never have their deals reneged on.

Everybody else, well, who cares? If you're a Liberal, who cares about everybody else? Those are the three groups they are concerned about. Those are the three groups that motivate a true Liberal. Those are three groups that all Liberals aspire to appease and acquiesce to.

Really, this Liberal government has no legitimacy in northern Ontario with the destruction—

Interjection.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Is he here? Mr. Jim Wilson: He's watching.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have to say hello to Adam Wilson from Simcoe-Grey, who is watching this evening.

Anyway, this House will be here until midnight tonight, but really, we understand and we know that the Liberals couldn't care less about what actually happens here.

Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Hillier has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2214 to 2244.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Hillier has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour, please rise to be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please rise to be counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 8; the nays are 26.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Bill 191, the Far North Act: I think I should share a little story about when I was up in the north recently at Nestor Falls. I met with the members of the northwest tourist outfitters and the Sunset tourism association. I met with and a number of people in Rainy River and Fort Frances. We talked about how this Far North Act and the other Liberal policies and regulations have had such a damaging effect on forestry, on mining

and on communities. But also, our tourism in the north is being hammered. Of course, Bill 191 is going to rob them of opportunities as well, just as it's robbing everybody else in the north.

It's important to recognize just what this Liberal government has done with our province. We now have half a million regulations—and Bill 191 is going to add to that—in this province. To put that in perspective, in British Columbia they have 200,000 provincial regulations. The people in Alberta have about 180,000 regulations.

It's interesting: There's a pocket edition of regulations that you can purchase. I have a copy here. In 2004, the pocket edition was 2,000 pages in length. In six short years—or long years under the Liberal government—that pocket edition has gone from 2,000 pages to 3,500 pages. Let's keep that in mind.

Each regulation requires the government to provide permission or to license. People have to apply, they have to enter a process to get government permission to do something. I want to ask everybody here and everybody watching, a half a million activities in this province are regulated and legislated. Can anybody here in this House, can the collective over there think of a half a million activities they could ever possibly do, let alone require permission, permits, licences, applications and government approval before you undertake them?

Of course, one has to ask why Ontario is the most heavily regulated jurisdiction in the country. Does it have some other consequence other than just this suffocation of activity? Clearly, we can see other provinces-I mentioned that Alberta and BC have about 200,00 provincial regulations. They are in a have position; they are still growing far greater than Ontario. They weathered the recession far greater than Ontario—less unemployment, less debt, less deficit. Their people are in far better condition and their economy is in far better condition. But we have a half a million regulations because of this Liberal government. This nanny-state government has created half a million provincial regulations. That's not including municipal regulations, the bylaws. It's not including the federal, the Criminal Code. This is just the provincial regulations. That's the lottery Ontario won when they got this Liberal government: half a million regulations.

2250

We have to understand that with Bill 191, each one of these regulations deprives people of opportunities. Bill 191 is going to add to that. Bill 191 is nothing more than robbing the people of Ontario of opportunity. It's taking a quarter of a million square kilometres of land and, in perpetuity, putting it off limits, taking away opportunities from individuals, taking away opportunities from individuals, taking away opportunities from our First Nations. You are robbing the people of Ontario, you're robbing our First Nations people, and you're doing it without care or concern and, I believe, without even an understanding of what you're doing. Half a million regulations, and you're going to add more to it, just as you're adding more with the forest tenure process,

you're adding to it in the tourism industry, and you're adding to it with the Endangered Species Act. You keep adding and adding. There is more than just one straw breaking the back of this economy. It's half a million straws that you're placing on it that are breaking our economy.

As I was listening to the debate today and listening to the ministers and Liberals talking about Bill 191, I remembered a little passage, and I would like to read it. I'll ask the people in the House if this reminds them of anybody. This was a fellow who was speaking of the socialist Prime Minister of France back during the second republic. He went on to say this about the Prime Minister: "I do not know that I have ever ... met a mind so void of any thought of the public welfare as his.... Neither have I ever known a mind less sincere.... When speaking or writing he spoke the truth or lied, without caring what he did, occupied only with the effect he wished to produce at the moment...." That sounds an awful lot like somebody else who's now the Premier in this province: devoid of any thought, devoid of any sincerity, just occupied in the moment of the time.

That's what we get: We end up with a half a million regulations. We end up with a nanny state. We end up with an under-performing economy. We end up with high unemployment rates. We end up with hardship when you have a government and a Premier who is not aware or doesn't care. That is what we have here.

I know they call themselves the Liberal Party, but they are the socialist party of Ontario, without a doubt. Anybody who can bring in that many regulations is the socialist party of our country, the socialist party of our province, and I think it's important—

Interjection.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Did I hear the member from Guelph say they that they're the communist party? I think that's what I heard the member from Guelph referring to them as. I know there are many who would probably agree with her as well, but I'll just say that the facts are clear that they are the socialist and the half-a-million-regulation party of the province.

I mentioned earlier about how cozy they are with the environmental community, how they brace up with the environmental community without any regard or concern for the consequences for the forestry industry or the mining industry or the tourism industry. Again, they're just concerned about those wolverines, not people.

But here, just to read—this is out of the latest edition of the Landowner Magazine. Maybe you guys want to get a copy of that. In 2007, the MNR funded Trees Ontario with \$958,000 of taxpayers' money. They also provided \$4,549,364 to the Nature Conservancy of Canada and \$500,000 to Evergreen. I know that's just a little drop in the bucket for these Liberals when they're spending \$100 billion-plus a year. But that's where our taxpayers' money is going to: Liberals paying money to these advocacy groups that then come in with bills like Bill 191.

Where did we get Bill 191 from? The Liberals bought and paid for it with their friends. That's why Monte

Hummel was the only individual who had ever heard of it before it got introduced. That's why Jon Baird from the prospectors and miners hadn't heard of it. That's why Grand Chief Stan Beardy never heard of it—because he wasn't on the list of green friends of the Liberals.

There's also something else I'd like to comment on, and I think it's a very apt reflection of this Liberal Party. It's about the seen and the unseen of Bill 191. This was written by Frédéric Bastiat. He said:

"In the economic sphere an act, a habit, an institution, a law produces not only one effect, but a series of effects. Of these effects, the first alone is immediate; it appears simultaneously with its cause; it is seen. The other effects emerge only subsequently; they are not seen; we are fortunate if we foresee them.

"There is only one difference between a bad" politician "and a good one: The bad" politician "confines himself to the visible effect; the good" politician "takes into account both the effect that can be seen and those effects that must be foreseen."

The Liberal government does not have any foresight, does not care to foresee the harm and the consequences of its policies. They are only concerned with the immediacy as they rob the people of Ontario of a quarter of a million square kilometres of land, as they rob the First Nations of over a hundred million acres of land and keep it exclusively for their friends like Monte Hummel of the World Wildlife Fund.

I have to ask this Liberal government, are they really a government of the people? Are they really, truly a democracy that cares about its constituency? Or is their constituency only the special interest groups who provide that political support they look for, who provide the legislative framework they aspire to, such as the Working Families Coalition, Monte Hummel and others? That is who this government is actually working for, not the people who have elected them, the people who pay their wages, the people who have an expectation of representation. No, this Liberal government is robbing the people of Ontario, robbing our children and our grand-children of opportunities, while they keep piling on the half-million regulations as they continue their quest for the ultimate nanny state they're so clearly looking for.

Thirty million acres of private land—one bill. More than three times that amount will be locked off, over a hundred million acres. I know that when I go up to the north, as I meet with the tourist outfitters, with the miners, with the foresters, I'll be hearing the same story over the next year: more and more hardship they're being asked to weather, more and more hardship they are being burdened with because of these regulations, these ill-conceived, poorly thought out pieces of legislation like Bill 191, the Far North Act.

2300

I wonder how many more resolutions from the First Nations it will take before this Liberal government responds. How many more protests, how many more demonstrations of opposition will it take before this Liberal government owns up to its obligations? Will you ever listen to those people or will you continue on with your empty, hollow words and platitudes, as we often hear: "We are committed to"? How many times have we heard the Liberals say, "We are committed to"? We heard it today: "We are committed to work with the First Nations. It's just that we're going to turn our backs on you and disregard you when you have a resolution," which asks for your commitment to work with them, a plea for you to work with them.

Make no mistake: Continue on this path and you will reap what you've sown. You will find the problems that you are creating with Bill 191, with the Endangered Species Act, with the hardships in tourism, in forestry—you're going to reap those. As the good member from Northumberland mentioned earlier, there will continue to be shaking as they bring in this agenda for their friends, this agenda of nirvana that they hope to create throughout this province as they appease their backroom friends at Courtyard or at Working Families or at the World Wildlife Fund.

Madam Speaker, it is disappointing to see that—oh, Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I just want to protest one particular part of the speech, where my good friend Mr. Hillier is accusing the Liberals of being socialists. My God. What is this world coming to? If that's socialism, I don't know what the heck is going on. I can tell you, it's nowhere near that.

I just want to say to my good friend that we sat on committee together last summer as this bill went out to travel across the province, and it was pretty clear—and Mr. Hillier I think makes the point well—that there wasn't a soul who came before the committee last year at first reading who said this is good legislation and it should be passed.

I want to speak to this a little bit later and I'm hoping that members will at least try to hear what we have to say on this particular bill. The issue is not that First Nations don't want a planning act; they want a planning act that they have some say in about how it's developed and how it's implemented and what it means to them in a final product, when it finally gets up and running some years down the road.

There is a real sense within the First Nations that this is a process that is being foisted on them. First, there were the changes to the Mining Act. Now we're going through the creation of this new Far North planning act. The only people to be affected by this legislation, by and large, are First Nations people; 99% of the people who live within the territory of the Far North planning act are First Nations.

It would seem to me—and this is where I agree with Mr. Hillier—that the First Nations should be in the driver's seat. We should be consulting with them as to what they think needs to happen when it comes to a good planning process, having other people at the table, along with the MNR, MOE and others that are involved, and

really trying to develop a product that at the end of the day creates clarity for those who want to develop in that area and allows for protection in a way that makes some sense from the perspective of both the environment and those First Nations that are affected by this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mr. David Orazietti: I'm please to respond to the remarks made by the member from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington. The member went on at length about government regulations and bureaucracy. We're going to be eliminating 7,000 pages of RST legislation on June 30, and I'm sure the member is pleased to be supporting the HST—and if his party has the opportunity, I'm sure they'll repeal it.

On the point of Bill 191, I think the member has clearly missed the mark. There have been consultations that have taken place and consultations that will continue to take place in the coming months. We have said very clearly that within Bill 191 as proposed, the First Nations will be able to initiate the planning process, and the minister will not sign off on any planning, community plans or land use plans for First Nations, unless the First Nations initiate it and are in agreement with it.

The member also referenced the prospectors, and not working with them. Garry Clark said very clearly that we have worked with them in order to address their industry's needs and concerns around the Far North initiative: "We are optimistic that the collection of geological data and other types of scientific data, needed for this project to be successful, will assist the explorers and developers of the Far North's minerals wealth." This is coming from the Ontario Prospectors Association itself.

There have been 30 projects that have been funded with First Nations for land use planning. All of those First Nations that have come forward, we have supported and helped to fund their community land use plan. No one has come forward who has been rejected and has not been able to move forward with their land use plan.

Members of the House know that we need to move forward with Bill 191.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions or comments?

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I want to talk for a couple of minutes on what our friend Mr. Hillier from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington said. He has been up north quite a bit listening to what the people have to say, and it's not very pretty, what they have to say about the Liberal government.

The biggest concern they have is that they don't have any members who represent them here, because they come down here, McGuinty tells them what to do and that's what they do; it doesn't matter. It was the same thing when the Toronto garbage all got trucked over to London; the London members all went quiet: "We're not going to say anything about that. We wouldn't want to get in trouble. We want the garbage to come to London." The sort of thing that happened then, it's the same thing now: We have members from the north who don't speak

up for it, and they let silly bills like this get put on there. You go up there and listen to them and they say, "This is our problem, up here: We have nobody speaking for us down there." They won't; they just won't speak up.

The people in the tourist industry are really upset, and the forest industry. They just let it go. Now they come up with—what is it called?—the Far North planning and protection act: more regulations, more rules. As my friend from Lanark said, we've got 500,000 of them in this book, and in British Columbia it's, what, 200,000 to 250,000? There's something funny here. But it's because we've got a government where the backbenchers, the members, are afraid to speak up for their areas. That's the problem, and that's where we get in trouble. You have a Premier who looks after Toronto, and that's about it, and the rest of them are afraid to speak up and say, "No, I have an area that I want to speak up for." That's what happens: Our members don't speak up, and we get in trouble. As I say, we get silly bills like this introduced into this House, and that's the problem that's going on right now. Until something changes, we're going to always be in this kind of trouble.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to have a couple of minutes on the comments of the members from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

I think it should be quite clear—there are some members in the Legislature who have been around this place a lot longer than I have, and some not as long as I have, but I don't know how often after first reading a piece of legislation introduced into this Legislature has actually travelled around the province. As has been referred to, but perhaps not clearly enunciated by members when they've spoken on the bill so far-and they make references to a lack of consultation—we have already gone out and travelled the province once after first reading on this particular bill. Bill 191 will be travelling again for a second time, I'm quite certain. I don't know that that's happening for sure; I don't have a travel schedule. In fact, I think it's quite clear to say that it's almost unheard of that legislation would actually travel twice with a committee. That's our commitment to people interested in this issue. That's our commitment to consultation on Bill 191: to travel not once but twice.

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A reference to funding: There's \$30 million committed to First Nations consultation. You heard the PA make reference just a short time ago to the clearly enunciated position by the minister of her intention not to go forward with any land use planning initiatives in the Far North unless they are first initiated and supported by First Nations communities as we go forward with this issue. I'm not sure how it could be made any clearer by any of us.

I wanted to comment as well—they often throw out things, just throwaway lines. Garry Clark, who runs the OPA in the province of Ontario—we've all gotten to know Garry quite well. The member just to my right, from Sault Ste. Marie, spoke very clearly on Mr. Clark's position on this. Yes, he expresses a concern but certainly not opposition.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington has two minutes for his response.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I want to thank the members from Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins-James Bay, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, and Thunder Bay-Atikokan.

Let's be clear here: The First Nations are passing resolutions opposing this. So to all of your comments, the response is that the First Nations are opposed because you haven't listened. To suggest that a second set of travel is consultation, when you refuse to act upon expressed wishes—it's not consultation, it's a façade. It's an empty façade that does nothing to inspire people to become involved. They see the emptiness of that statement.

The member from James Bay does have it right: The First Nations are the people up there who need to be in the driver's seat, not, as the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound mentioned, the members from Toronto. That's the problem with Bill 191; that's the motivation of Bill 191. It's been brought forward to appease and appeal to the people of southern Ontario, not the people who live in the north and who will have to carry the burden of this bill. The member from Bruce-Grey hit the nail on the head. This Liberal government has backbenchers who do not stand up and represent their constituents. Their members from the north kowtow to the members from Toronto. That is why we see such anger in the north, when we travel up there, over this Liberal bill and Liberal government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm going to try to outline, as clearly as I can at this late hour—some 10 minutes after 11 o'clock on a Tuesday night—what the situation is in regard to land use planning vis-à-vis First Nations in northern Ontario.

Let me just start off by saying this: There are probably not very many people within First Nations communities in the north who say there shouldn't be some sort of planning regime. I think all of us understand, in one way or another, that First Nations very much want to have development in their territories. The issue is, how is that development going to happen? They understand, as we do, that if they're going to have a prosperous future and an opportunity for their kids to benefit from this economy we call Ontario, there has to be some kind of development in those territories. The key is, how will they be able to share the jobs and opportunities that those developments can get us?

I want to say up front that First Nations do want a planning regime. They're not opposed to the idea of having some form of planning, because they recognize that as development goes forward, we need to set out the rules for how that development will go forward so that it reflects their traditional values when it comes to what happens in their territory; so that the environment is protected and we don't have wholesale hoarding of natural resources at the expense of the environment; and so that in the end there are some rules about making sure we are sensitive when it comes to development that reflects the traditional values that First Nations have about the land.

Let me start from this point: To understand the First Nations people—my good friend Donna Cansfield will know this, because she has travelled with many of the same people I've travelled with—it's all about the land. If you talk to anybody who's a First Nations person, when it comes to the ability—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I wonder if you guys could have your conversations somewhere else. It would be kind of helpful.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: As I was saying, the first thing you need to understand is that First Nations people identify themselves by way of the land. That's what it's all about. And it's something that's really hard to explain, because it's really an emotive type of response that First Nations people have vis-à-vis what the territory means to them. You have to ask yourselves this question: Why, in the middle of all the poverty we see in northern Ontario when it comes to First Nations communities—some of you have been fortunate enough to travel on committee, or individually as members, into some of these communities where you have virtually 90% unemployment do people continue to stay there? Yes, it's because their families are there; that's a big reason why. But it's also a connection to the land, the cycle that the land brings to them and to their lives, and about how they identify themselves through the land itself, everything from being able to go out and do the goose hunt in the spring, to fishing, to hunting in the fall, to trapping—doing the things that are important to them that they have been doing for millennia on that territory.

So when we, the crown—as they see us, the colonial government—come in and say, "We're going to impose a planning system on you," it's a bit of an odd reaction that First Nations give toward the government. They say, "We understand, in the context of the modern world, that we need to have planning, but where do you think we've been for thousands of years? Do you think we've not been planning and taking care of the territory that the Creator has given us? Don't you think we haven't, in our own concepts, figured out ways of being able to protect our land and develop the land in a way that's sustainable to both the environment and ourselves, as the people living on that territory?"

So, understand that the context of this debate within First Nations is the whole idea of that what happens on the land is central to who First Nations people are. That's why you're seeing a large pushback on the part of a lot of community leaders, as far as band councils, tribal councils and individual community members who are really pushing back on this Far North planning act against the

government. They're saying, "Hang on a second. Whatever the product is at the end, we want it to reflect those values that we have as First Nations people." As we look at the document today, Bill 191 as it was tabled at first reading and is now here for second reading, those values are not, in their view, sufficiently safeguarded within the process of the legislation we have established.

So I just want to say up front that you really have to understand that first part: The land is important as an identity to the First Nations people, and anything around the land is very serious business in their own minds.

The second point is that they do want land use planning. But land use planning just for the sake of doing it is not what they want at the end; they want a product that they're able to work with. They understand that at the end, if development is going to happen—and it will happen—we need to have some sort of mechanism under law to ensure that whatever development happens is not going to harm the environment irreparably over a longer period of time. And there's some experience in that. The De Beers mine that was started up, the Victor Diamond Mine up in Attawapiskat, is a good example of how things can go well when a First Nation is in contact with the company, where they decide that they're going to work together and whatever is developed is developed in a way that there has to be a buy-in in the community.

I remember, at the beginning of the process of De Beers determining if they were going to go forward and build this mine, they decided, probably some eight years before the mine actually opened—maybe even 10 years—and correctly so, that they would not go forward without the consent of the First Nation. That's important, because that was the first time a mining company had actually said in Ontario, "We will not go forward and develop this mine unless we have the consent of the First Nations when it comes to the rules of engagement about how this mine is going to be built and what it means to them."

So there was a very long, protracted process by which First Nations members in Attawapiskat, Fort Albany and other communities engaged with De Beers in order to determine what this impact benefit agreement should look like when it came to allowing the mine to go forward. And yes, it was a very costly process. I would estimate that probably somewhere between \$25 million to \$30 million was spent by De Beers and by First Nations in trying to put together what eventually became the first IBA that De Beers put in place with the Attawapiskat First Nation. But because there was a process where De Beers said at the beginning, "It won't happen without consent," eventually they were able to work out an agreement that was ratified by 85% of the community members in Attawapiskat.

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Now, is everybody in Attawapiskat happy with De Beers? No. You'll never have everybody happy with the development, as we all know in our own communities. But the point was, there was a process at the very least that allowed the First Nations members in Attawapiskat,

and eventually in the other communities where IBAs were signed on the James Bay, an opportunity to have a say about how that development was going to happen.

What were some of the things that the First Nations wanted? It wasn't just a simple question of saying, "I want jobs and I want economic opportunity as far as business was etc." What they wanted to know is, "What's this mine going to do to the environment? How is it going to affect the fishery on the Attawapiskat River?" those people who enjoy fishing on the river—"How is it going to affect the waters flowing from the De Beers mining project into the James Bay through the Attawapiskat River? What is this going to mean for the caribou that migrate through that area on a seasonal basis?" They wanted to make sure that when the De Beers mine actually started development and eventually went into production, that there was a good understanding of what needed to be done in order to mitigate those damages that could happen to the environment.

In a sense, Attawapiskat led the way, along with the rest of the communities on the James Bay. They engaged De Beers in a conversation that took some eight to 10 years in order to determine, "How are we going to safeguard the land?" Because what they wanted to know at the end of the day was that while land has been there for a millennium, the mine will only be there for 20 or 25 years, and after it's gone, what's going to be left? Are they going to be left with some sort of environmental disaster that's going to affect them for years to come when it comes to their ability to practise their traditional ways of doing things when it comes to harvesting the land through the means that they use to hunt, fish and gather as a nation?

The point I want to make here is that there are examples where planning can happen and can happen successfully. Again I want to say, on the De Beers issue, not everybody is happy today. There are certainly people who are offside with the De Beers agreement. But the point here is that at least there was a process that was established between the company and the First Nations in order to get an agreement to go forward.

I wouldn't say this is where it started, but this was a large catalyst in getting us to where we are now with Bill 191, the Far North Act, because what we learned through that process is that De Beers and Attawapiskat had to invent it themselves. What First Nations were saying, from Mushkegowuk Tribal Council to Wabun Tribal Council, to Matawa, Treaty 3 and Treaty 9, was the same thing: "We need to have some sort of a process so we don't, as communities, have to go out and renegotiate every darned deal that happens when it comes to development." We need some common rules about how development is going to happen so that, in fact, there is a bit of a—how would you say—how-to book about how development is going to happen in those traditional territories.

For the developers it was as important, because De Beers certainly learned through that process, as Musselwhite did when they developed the mine for the

Musselwhite project, that it is extremely expensive for the companies themselves to pay for this as part of their development. You have to ask yourself the question, is it really the responsibility of a mining company, forestry company, hydro development or whatever it might be to be those who fund the planning process? And I say not. I think that's a societal responsibility. I don't think it's the responsibility of the company to pay for that. Should they be involved? Sure they should be involved, because they're going to be end benefactors of what the land has to give. Is there a role for them? Absolutely. But there needs to be a mechanism, and there need to be some rules established at the provincial level that say, "Here are what the rules of engagement are." If there's going to be development, here are the things that you have to have regard to, here are the things that are law, that are written in stone, and here are the things that you've got to do in order to make your development become a reality. Those fundamental principles that are important when it comes to planning become respected.

This is where I want to go from this particular point: First Nations, as I said at the beginning, identify themselves through the land. What you also need to understand is that they are now trying to come to terms with how they as a nation of communities—and that's what you need to understand here. They do not regard themselves strictly as Ontario and Canadian citizens. They regard themselves as their own nation. They have never. in their estimation and their experience, ceded their political responsibility to govern themselves to the crown by way of treaty. When you talk to First Nations elders and community members in Treaty 9 or Treaty 3 or Treaty 5 or whatever it might be, it is very clear that the collective understanding is that there was a treaty signed to share the land between First Nations and the Europeans and, in sharing the land, both must benefit. That was the concept by which the treaties were signed. So they have never ceded their political authority over those territories. Those are the territories of the Mushkegowuk, of whatever tribal council they belong to, the Nishnawbe-Aski Treaty 9 or Treaty 5 or Treaty 3. They have never ceded the lands.

You have to understand it from their perspective. They're saying, "We are the ones who should be coming up with what type of action needs to be developed to deal with planning." They're saying to the government, they're saying to the crown, in this case Ontario, "We're not offside with the idea of a planning act, but we want a planning act where we have a say in how it's developed and what its principles should be."

Here's the important part. Don't foist this on them, because they are trying to come to terms themselves, as a nation of communities, with what development and what a planning act should look like. Fort Severn, Peawanuck, Attawapiskat or whatever community—they're all at different levels of understanding, capacity and where they're at when it comes to developing ideas for planning in their own communities.

Within our First Nations, we have not even scratched the surface of the issue of regional planning. So far, planning is looked at strictly from the reserve community itself. It's not necessarily seen at a regional level.

You need to understand that they're going to need time to move forward with what a planning act should look like for a couple of reasons. One is, they need to organize themselves so that they're able to come together as a group of communities, as NAN or whoever's authority they fall within, and determine, "What are the questions we want to ask when it comes to what planning should look like?" They're going to need to develop the resources necessary to actually put together legislation that eventually would govern how planning is to be done.

What I want to say is this: They're not there yet. We're basically trying to foist on First Nations a bill that might be well-intended, but which in the end is going to foist a product on to First Nations that they're not ready to accept.

I ask this very fundamental question, and that is, if the McGuinty government says there is a new relationship with our First Nations—put yourself in their shoes. You're saying there's going to be a new relationship, but from where they sit, the relationship looks no different than it ever was before, because from their perspective, they're seeing a provincial government, in this case the crown of Ontario, push legislation through the Legislature that will bind them in a process that they may not be necessarily supportive of or happy with when it does finally get third reading and royal assent.

So I would very strongly urge the provincial government to take some time and allow First Nations to organize themselves so they can pull together what it is they want in a planning act, how it's to look and what the principles are to be etc. If that takes four, five or 10 years, you know what? The land has been there for thousands of years, my friends. It ain't going nowhere. It's going to be there for another thousand years for sure.

If we take extra time to allow the First Nations to develop the resources within their communities and deal with what a planning act should look like and resource them properly as far as making sure they've got financing to hire and train the people necessary to work on developing a planning act, you will end up with a much stronger planning act that would reflect the principles of the First Nations.

Here's the kicker: Once they've signed on, you will then have clear rules when it comes to development, because First Nations will establish what the rules of engagement are and how it's supposed to work. It's no different than any other municipality in the province of Ontario that does the same when it comes to planning.

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I just want to say up front, don't foist this product onto First Nations, because you're not going to get what you want at the end. If the stated goal of the government at the end is to put in place a planning act that's going to tell corporations how they're to go forward with development in the Far North, don't think that once this act is passed there will not be blockades—because, my friends, I'll tell you here in this House today: There will be

blockades. If they are not satisfied with what comes out of Bill 191, there will be First Nations who will say, "We are not onside. We don't want this project to go forward in the way that you're proposing it will, and we will do what we can, within our ability, to slow it down or stop it." The environmental movement will be right there with them. You're not solving the problem by forcing a product onto First Nations that they are not comfortable with. I really say to you that you need to go back and you need to give them the ability.

My good friend—I think it was the member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan; I forget. Maybe it was the member from Sault Ste. Marie—said that the government has consulted on this far more than any other bill in a long time and how great that consultation was. Yes, the government did introduce the bill at first reading and put it out to committee, and I applauded the government for that because I thought it was important so that we could gauge where people were when it came to this particular bill. But I'll tell you, what was clear was that as we travelled on committee in northern Ontario and went to the various communities to hear what people had to say about the bill, there was nobody from the First Nations communities, nobody from the mining communities, nobody from the municipal level of government and nobody from the environmental movement that was onside with the version of Bill 191 as it stands.

What we did learn is that not only were the First Nations offside but, quite frankly, most of the people affected by this legislation in one way or another were not happy for different reasons. Obviously, the environmental movement would like to have strong rules that really protect the environment in a way that makes them more comfortable than what is currently proposed in the act. Clearly, First Nations want a process of planning where they can feel that they're in the driver's seat, that they have a say about what's going to happen in their traditional territories. The mining and forestry companies say, "Listen, give me some rules that everybody has bought into so I know that if I've a project moving forward, it's not going to get stopped by protests or blockades because they're not happy with the product."

If the government is saying, "We want to provide clarity to developers by way of the planning act," you're not getting clarity, because the First Nations won't buy into it in the way that it's currently put forward. So I say again to the government that you really need to put the brakes on this one.

Again, it was clear at the committee hearings that there was nobody onside when it came to what was being proposed in this version of the act. What I thought was going to happen was that—I was being asked by various First Nation members and others, "What's going on with the planning act this winter?" I figured that the government had raised this as a trial balloon and, rightfully so, came to the conclusion that, although it's a noble idea to develop a planning act and to try to get a product done lickety-split, it was pretty clear that the First Nations were offside and that they needed to go back and give

some time to work out whatever needed to be done in order to get to a final product. I said, "I think it's going to die on the order paper. I don't think the government is going to call it for second reading." I was surprised a couple of weeks ago when it showed up on the radar screen at a House leaders' meeting that Bill 191 was going to get called back. I figured, "Well, maybe something has happened that I'm not aware of." So I got on the phone and I called people within the First Nations communities that I represent. I also called NAN and others—Chief Angus Toulouse, Stan Beardy and a number of other people—and they were surprised. They said, "What do you mean? Nobody has told us this legislation is coming back. We're still trying to sort things out here. What do you mean it's coming back?"

I put the question clearly to Stan Beardy, I guess it was last week, and they were pretty clear that they didn't want this bill going forward. In fact, they sent me an email. I don't have my glasses so I'm not going to read the email verbatim, but what they're saying is that they don't want this bill to be passed at second reading as it stands. They don't like the product the way it sits, and they need some time in order to do what I'm suggesting, which is to allow First Nations the ability to go and do some of the work that needs to be done in order to develop a planning act that works for them.

The other thing is that you have to look at this in the context of what else is important when it comes to the development of a planning act. How can you have a planning act but not have a mechanism to allow First Nations to benefit from the economic activities on their own traditional territories?

Imagine that in the community where you come from, there was a developer of some type who would come into the community and say, "I'm starting up some kind of a project, but I'm not paying any taxes to the city or the town. I'm not going to provide, other than employment, any benefit to the local community when it comes to paying our share of infrastructure that's necessary to allow a community to thrive to be able to support the development"—whatever the development might be. People in any community, any municipality, would be up in arms. Nobody would allow development to happen if they're not going to get some benefit out of it.

That's the case now with First Nations. You can literally start a mine right next to the First Nation, literally cut down the forest, literally dam the river, and there is no mechanism by law that allows First Nations an ability to share in the economic activity that is taking place.

Do governments and companies negotiate impactbenefit agreements? Absolutely. A good example of that is Ontario Power Generation. It's currently in discussions trying to come to terms with various First Nations when it comes to the redevelopment of the Mattagami River basin. They've signed an agreement with Moose Cree First Nation, and Moose Cree First Nation is satisfied with the terms it negotiated with OPG. Other communities such as New Post and Mocreebec are trying to get the same. There is, obviously, in this day and age, more of an understanding that you can't dam the river, build the mine or cut the trees of the forest without giving the First Nations some ability to share in the economic activity that is going to take place in their own backyard. But how do you allow, in this century, that to happen without any legislative framework for revenue-sharing or benefits from the economic project? It's beyond me.

Again I say, we would not, in our communities, allow a development to go forward if it didn't have a net benefit to our community. If somebody came knocking at your door and said, "You're a community of 50,000, and we're going to start up a development, and there will be no taxes paid to the municipality, and we're not even necessarily going to hire anybody from here. We're going to fly people in to do the jobs that have to be done in your community"—boy, I can tell you, in Timmins they wouldn't let that happen. They wouldn't let it happen in Perth. It wouldn't happen in Ottawa. It certainly wouldn't happen in Toronto. Why are we allowing it to happen in places such as the Peawanucks of the world or Marten Falls or Attawapiskat?

Why are we allowing development to happen without any mechanism to allow First Nations to share? I say to the government, a planning act is fine, but the accompanying piece that has to go with this is revenue-sharing. There needs to be a provision within legislation somewhere—I would argue not necessarily the planning act, probably in a separate act—that creates some sort of regime so that the First Nation is able to benefit from the economic activity that is taking place.

I don't argue for one second, just so that people know, creating a new tax. That's not what I'm talking about here. I'm saying the provincial government and the federal government get a huge amount of revenue from activities on the developments in those territories. The crown of Ontario should be sharing the revenue that it gets from those projects with those communities affected or, at the very least, giving the First Nations community an equivalent ability to derive revenue, as we do in municipalities, by way of municipal taxation.

We may not be able, because of the Indian Act, to create municipal taxation in the same way. But certainly we can find something that will be akin to giving a First Nations community the ability to raise revenue that would allow them to develop the infrastructure in their communities so that their communities are able to benefit as a result of the economic development. It's absolutely preposterous that we allow development to happen in those communities and we do not have a mechanism to revenue-share whatsoever with those First Nations. So we need to have an accompanying piece of legislation that deals with the issue of revenue-sharing.

The other issue is that we need to have a real engagement and a real dialogue between First Nations and the provincial government, because we're responsible for training, to develop the capacity in our communities so that they're able to benefit from those jobs that are going to be happening as a result of economic activity.

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I'll give you an example of what I'm talking about. I was in Constance Lake maybe a month or a month and a half ago, where Northland Power, a company that was bidding on some of this green energy, is going to be developing a number of run-of-the-river dams between Hearst and Constance Lake. It's a fairly large project. You're probably talking somewhere in the neighbourhood of 300 to 400 people being hired to work on the construction of this, if not more. I forget what the numbers are. I think it actually is more than 300 to 400, so I apologize to those who will be reading this later if I have the number wrong.

In the particular community meeting that I was at, Northland Power was saying that there are going to be all kinds of opportunities for community members to get jobs—and community members were excited, saying, "Holy jeez, I can get a job out of this? This will be a great thing"—under the construction process, which is going to take four to five years.

But then they started to figure out, "What are those jobs?" The job is a machinist, a mechanic, an electrician—certified tradespeople—engineers, people who have university diplomas. How many people in Constance Lake have those particular skills to be hired to work on that type of project? Not very many. There are some, because Lecours Lumber operates a mill in Constance Lake. There are tradespeople there, yes, and there are some qualified people available in the community. But to be able to give those community members who are unemployed an ability to get those jobs—there was no mechanism.

What is needed is that the province has to engage in discussions with First Nations in order to develop precertified apprenticeship training so that a person who wants to work on such a project is able to get qualified to serve the apprenticeship. As you know, if you want to be an apprentice, you need a minimum of grade 12, and in some cases many of the community members don't have grade 12. At the very least, there needs to be an ability to do some sort of equivalency training so that people are able to qualify for the apprenticeship training. There needs to be an engagement on the part of the province-"engagement" is not the word; "engagement" is the French word. The English word is—there needs to be a commitment on the part of the provincial government that they will in fact assist with supporting apprentices and their wages while they're training with their employers on these types of jobs, as we used to do in this province in the past.

The issue I'm trying to get at here is that you need to develop capacity within those communities. There are very few communities that have the ability to fulfill the roster of jobs that could be created as a result of a development. There are very few communities that have the people who can benefit fully from those particular jobs.

So I say to my colleagues on the other side of the House that the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, I believe, has to rethink and discuss with First Nations how we're able to provide real training so that individuals who live in those communities are able to benefit from those jobs that will be created when those developments go forward. Otherwise, what you're going to end up with is what we see now at De Beers, and this is the unfortunate part. Yes, there are lots of First Nations members working at De Beers; probably just over 100 are working there. The last time I looked, I think it was 120, 130 First Nations members working on the De Beers site, which is not insignificant. But by and large, they are at the lower end of these skilled jobs. The higher-skilled jobs are filled by people who are flown in from outside the community.

How fair is that to the community members? It is their natural resources that they're sharing with us. Should we not, at the very least, allow them to have the ability to benefit by way of the higher-skilled jobs that are going

on in those projects?

I understand, as a certified electrician, you just can't take somebody off the street and say, "You're an electrician. Go and do the job and I'm going to pay you a tradesman's rate." It doesn't work that way, but you need to have an ability to train people to get to that point.

A good friend of mine, Gilbert Cheechoo, who is the IBA coordinator in Moose Factory for De Beersactually, for the Moose Cree with De Beers-made a suggestion some years ago. I thought it was rather unfortunate because I had suggested it then to the Conservative government and it fell on deaf ears. The Liberal government has been no better on this point. But he made the following point—I thought at first it was radical and at first I sort of cringed when he said it, but as I started to understand it and think about it, it made sense. He said, "If we know, for example, during the construction of the De Beers mine we're going to need 30 electricians, we should set aside a certain number of those jobs to be filled by First Nations people, and you have it on a sliding scale going up so that you hire people from outside of the community to do those jobs that we need to get filled now, but then we bring in people who are able to train and serve their apprenticeships so that those people who are from the community end up becoming qualified to take those jobs themselves." It was sort of like a quota system on a sliding basis forward over a period of time.

Because they used the word "quota," I think a whole bunch of people got really nervous because of what quotas meant politically at the time, given the Employment Equity Act. What I took from that is that it's not a bad idea, that what you would do is say, "We know there's going to be a need for X amount of electricians over a five-year period. We'd like to train a certain number of community members to fill those positions, and once they become trained they're able to stay, and those who were there to do the training are able to move on to something else." That way you're able to develop some capacity within a community so that people can benefit from those particular jobs.

The other part that you need to do, as far as development of capacity—and Michael Bryant had spoken to this

and at least understood it after a whole bunch of conversations I had with him when he was responsible for native issues—is to develop capacity within communities so that communities can organize themselves when it comes to issues like land use planning. How does Attawapiskat deal with land use planning if they don't have people within their own community who are experts in land use planning? You've got to train people to understand what land use planning is all about and what the principles are so that the community can then come to terms with what land use planning should look like.

There was a bit of an attempt early on by the government to put some dollars forward to do some development capacity building, as they called it at the time. I thought that wasn't a bad idea. Unfortunately, it never really got the kind of support it needed within cabinet to give First Nations an ability to draw on funds that would allow them to train people within their own communities to deal with issues such as land use planning and the development of such legislation, so that they could say, "What are the better principles of land use planning as we understand them from the Europeans"—or, as they see us, the colonials—"and how do we impose our values within that so we have a product at the end of the day that meets the needs of the developers but, more importantly, meets our needs as First Nations and respects the land?"

So I think one of the things that really needs to happen is there needs to be an effort on the part of the provincial government to put together a fund that would allow First Nations to develop that capacity within their communities to allow them to do what needs to be done when it comes to developing a land use planning process such as is being suggested.

Another point I want to make is this: It's pretty clear in talking to First Nations at the NAN level and at the community level that nobody wants this government to move forward with this bill at this point. I'm a little bit surprised that the government has moved forward. I know from talking tonight to some of the government members in the House—we were having a bit of a chat and the discussion was, "Isn't it better to have something there on the shelf that's a model they could work toward? They would at least have a jump-start into land use planning." If you establish the legislation and the rules for land use planning and you put it there supposedly as something they can draw down on, it's going to be pretty hard to draw down anything if all the decisions are made. So it's pretty clear that First Nations are saying, "We don't want you to go forward with this, because if you do, you don't have our consent as far as moving forward."

I want to be very clear with the government that the First Nations—NAN, Mushkegowuk, Matawa, Wabun and the rest—are all saying the same thing: "Put the brakes on. Let us organize ourselves as First Nations when it comes to dealing with what the principles of land use planning should be. Give us the time to do that. Provide us some funds so that we can pull that together and do the development capacity that's necessary to get us there, and we'll come back to you when we're ready."

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I know that's a concept—many people here in the Legislature will say, "Why should we let them? Why should we wait for them?" Well, they've been on the lands for thousands of years. They've managed to do quite well at preserving the land as it has been for thousands and thousands of years, so they've got a pretty good understanding of what land use planning should be from sort of an emotive point of view, and a practical point of view, I would argue, as well.

So I say to the government, allow that process to happen. What you will end up with is, you will have a two-stage process. Those people who want to do development in the territory now without a land use planning act—that would not be in place yet—can go out and negotiate impact benefit agreements, and all the government would have to say is that before any project goes forward in the NAN territory or other traditional territories, there needs to be an impact benefit agreement signed by the parties. I'll tell you, the developers will do what they have to do if they understand that that's the price of doing business. They'll go out and do it. We saw the example with De Beers, who went forward with that particular principle. It took them some time, but they got there.

But what would also happen is that you would have a parallel process by which First Nations would start coming together on "How do we, first of all, determine which communities have control over what lands?" because that's a huge issue, as we all know. There is overlapping jurisdiction within First Nations about whose territory and whose land this really is. Does it belong to Attawapiskat? Does it belong to Kashechewan? Is it Fort Albany? Is it Marten Falls? Is it Fort Severn? Is it Peawanuck?

They've got to deal with those issues themselves because those, you have to understand, have been—what has happened is that those lands have changed as far as who sees themselves as the owner over a period of time because of family relationships. The reserve system is a fairly new one, as compared to those family relationships. So they've got to be able to deal with that particular issue themselves as far as which community has control over which pieces of land.

Then they have to deal with "How do we deal with regional land use planning so that we're able to effectively work together as communities when it comes to whether a project that's developed at the top of the river, at the head of the river, is not going to affect somebody at the bottom end of the river, where the water flows?" There needs to be some regional approach when it comes to land use planning, and that's something that really needs to be done. To do that, First Nations need to deal with their own jurisdictional issues that they're trying to deal with themselves.

In fact, there has been a fair amount of progress done. You would know that First Nations have been meeting on a couple of occasions now in order to try to deal with these issues. The latest meeting, I believe, was in Fort Severn, where pretty well all of the signatories of the

adhesion to Treaty 9 met in order to deal with this very issue. What they came out of that meeting with was that they've signed an agreement in principle that allows them to start the process of determining who owns what pieces of land and allows them to be able to deal with that together on a regional basis. So I say to the government across the way, there's no use trying to rush the process if the First Nations themselves are not onside.

The other point I want to make—and I know I'm going to get cut off here at some point, so I'll try to make it short—is this: I said this at the beginning, and you really, really have to understand this part. I'm going to repeat it again, because I think it's important. First Nations do identify themselves through the land. It's all about the land. If you're going in and you're trying to put a planning act in place that runs counter to what their natural instinct is as to how you protect that land, you're not achieving a heck of a lot. So I think it's important for the government to understand that you need to give First Nations that ability to do that for planning.

I've still got a bit of time, Madam Speaker, I take it? Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay. I was looking up at the clock and wondering if I wanted to get into that or not at this point. Well, let's deal with this issue.

What I'm being told by a number of people, not only within the First Nations but also just generally people in northern Ontario, is "Why, all of a sudden, is everybody so excited about getting a planning act going?" People are starting to correctly conclude all of a sudden, that there's gold in them thar hills, as they say in good English. We start to see, for example, the development of the Ring of Fire, where we have the largest chromite deposits in the world that are contained pretty well smack dab in the middle of my riding, in what's called the Ring of Fire.

All of a sudden, people are asking if the reason the government is moving on this is so that they can foist some sort of planning process in order to facilitate the development, never mind doing the protection side of how you protect the land. There is some argument to be made for that, because what's clearly happening—and we saw it in the case of Platinex and KI—is that there are some unscrupulous developers out there who would love nothing more than to come in and be told that there is a process they can follow in order to get the proper permits and that they don't have to take into consideration the needs, wishes and aspirations of First Nations.

Now, I'm not saying that's widespread. I'm not saying every mining company would do that. I think quite the opposite; I think the vast majority want to do the right thing. But there are certain companies out there that, quite frankly, are willing to—how would you say it?—take the shortcut and allow a development to go forward without, really, the consent or the will of the First Nation.

As you look at this Ring of Fire that the government has made a big thing of, what we end up with is a government all of a sudden wanting to put together a planning act that would facilitate the development of the Ring of Fire.

I just say that the Ring of Fire is going to happen, my friends. Don't worry about it. Listen, First Nations would like to see the Ring of Fire started. But if you foist a planning process on them, you're going to be creating more controversy, and you're going to be creating more resistance within the First Nations communities to development, because they're not going to feel that it is their development process. I want to be really clear on this point: At the end, the development is going to happen, but you've really got to put the First Nations in a position such that they're able to feel comfortable with what's going on.

It's no different than what happens in our communities. If somebody comes in and says, "I want to start up a plant or a development of some type in your community," there's a process they've got to go through, which has to have some community buy-in. You just can't go in and do anything you want without dealing with the concerns that individuals in that community may have. You need to have the same thing when it comes to First Nations.

The government needs to understand that creating a planning act is not necessarily going to create a better environment for development to happen. In fact, if you create a planning act that First Nations have not bought into, you're going to end up, quite frankly, with the opposite.

I talked to Chief Elijah Moonias, from Marten Falls; Thursday, I think, is when I last saw him. I'm going to have an opportunity to see him in a couple of weeks when I travel to his community. He is one of the ones who are saying exactly that. He's saying, "Listen, I want development to happen, because I know what it means to my community. But if you do not do the development in such a way that my community will benefit, and if you don't respect the land, we're going to stop you."

In fact, you will know that the community of Marten Falls, under his leadership, has basically blocked the development of winter strips to land aircraft on to do some exploration in that particular area of the Ring of Fire. They're clearly saying, communities like Marten Falls, "We need to make sure that there's a process at the end of the day that puts us in a position of comfort, so that we know what that development is and so that development goes forward in some way that makes some sense."

I see it's almost that time of the evening, Madam Speaker, and I would be fine if we continued some other day.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It being close to 12 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9.

The House adjourned at 2359.

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Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
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Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea-Gore-Malton	initial daty around a position of the contract of positions and positions are provided in the contract of the
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
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Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Delicities CV
, and a sound of the control of the	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
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Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
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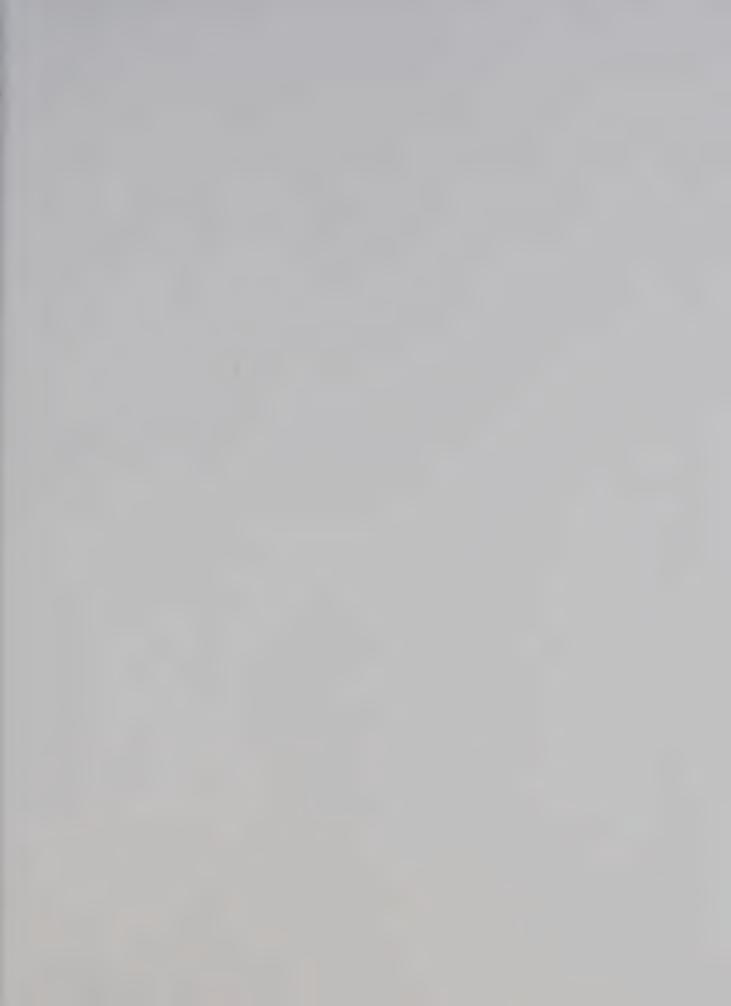
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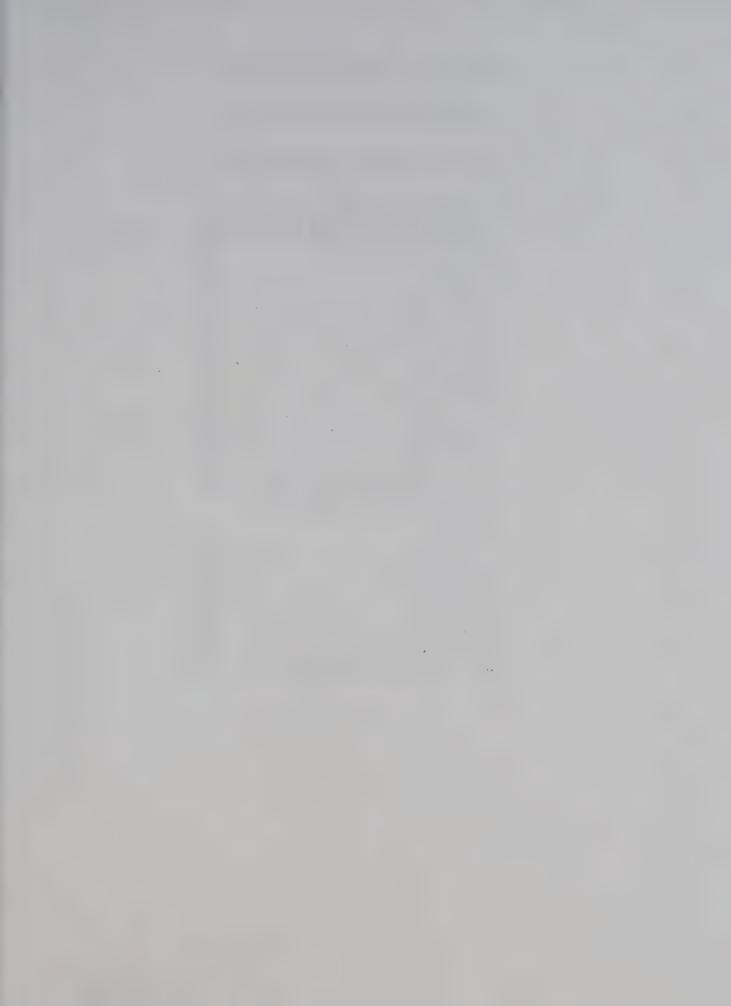
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